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№20

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Edgar Rice

ROY of the APES

MASTER of

by David Anthony Kraft

Much has been written about Edgar Rice Burroughs—a great deal of it complimentary, and some of it not so complimentary. In fact, entire volumes of criticism devoted to his work exist, and there are myriad amateur journals that take extreme delight in speculating at great length on obscure aspects of his novels and short stories.

However, I think his importance and influence are still not fully credited despite all this "illegitimate" critical attention (illegitimate only in the sense that, for the most part, the purveyors of "legit" literary criticism have yet to recognize Burroughs as other than a writer of mediocre potboilers). What I mean is that, apart from ERB's relative lack of merits as perceived by those whose self-proclaimed duty it is to judge such things, he has had tremendous impact upon the thought-processes of teenage America for a major portion of this century.

And he continues to have such an impact.

I discovered Edgar Rice Burroughs one chill morning on a paperback book rack in a truckstop cafe. I was age 12. Perhaps I'm not representative of my generation, but I'd been reading books and magazines for several years. Yet none of them seems memorable, none of them affected me in the way that Edgar Rice Burroughs did. In fact, without embarrassment, I can say that the discovery of Burroughs marked a turning point in my life.

First, and most likely foremost, ERB represents the essence of storytelling. His style evolved over the years, but he never lost his mastery of basics—his ability to produce compelling prose and cliffhanging structure that married into an irresistible if somewhat episodic novel-form that has spawned an entire school of writing, and that gave rise and impetus in large part to the entire field of pulp fiction which so dominated newsstands of the Thirties and Forties, and which now rules the paperback stands.

That alone was enough to damn him forever in critics' eyes, for pulp prose is ostensibly incompatible with literary achievement of any kind.

And Burroughs' other major contribution, the one that distinguishes him from the vast corps of nameless hacks who labored to fill those endless aforementioned pulps, is his interjection of a personal, authorial point of view that readily divulged his thoughts and feelings and observations about the world around him.

It is this which makes him unique, which gives him his enduring popularity and tremendous ability to influence young readers. I say *young* because, since the

Burroughs:

MARV of MARS

FOOMtasy!

stories are basically tales of adventure, they appeal in part to a readership which has not yet experienced the pervasive pressure to read more sedate and allegedly thought-provoking material. And more, for that very reason, they reach a readership which has not yet been conditioned to view life through eyes of socially-molded and methodically-brainwashed acceptance.

More than anything else, Edgar Rice Burroughs was a dissenter. In an age of increasing technological proficiency, at the dawn of the automotive age, when the future could only continue a trend of civilized wonder and convenience and abundance, Edgar Rice Burroughs poked jibes at the antics of his complacent fellows and, through the eyes and thoughts of his major fictional creation—Tarzan of the Apes—he condemned civilization and advocated a return to the natural.

Now, irrespective of whether or not that viewpoint is valid or tenable, it succeeds in doing one very important thing to young readers, which is establishing a healthy scepticism, the ability to question the *status quo*. And that, friends, is the single most important thing that a teenager can ever hope to learn while entangled in the web of mis-representations and deliberate conditioning promulgated by an Establishment school system that is devoted to perpetuating a hypocritical social structure.

Therein lies the value of Edgar Rice Burroughs' work, beyond its unsurpassed entertainment qualities. Rock music, which also stimulates free thought, is a relatively recent innovation that shares the ability to reach a young audience—but Burroughs preceded it by almost half a century, and continues to reach a receptive audience.

The combination of two essential factors—medium and message—is the obvious explanation for Edgar Rice Burroughs' undiminished popularity. He continues to be reprinted year after year, in both hardcover and paperback, and is regularly adapted into other media, such as motion pictures and comic magazines. Rightly so, too, for whatever his influences, Burroughs was an *original*.

Born on September 1, 1875 in—of all places—Chicago, ERB spent 35 years pursuing a variety of uninspired careers, none of them successful. In quite another way, however, these years were invaluable to him as experience upon which to draw as a writer—for without a knowledge of life, it is extraordinarily difficult to convey an accurate impression of it via the printed word.

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Edgar Rice Burroughs: MASTER of FOOMtasy!

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ERB dabbled in poetry and storytelling to a limited extent, mostly for amusement, until he decided after reading one of the pulp magazines of the period that he could do better, and put pen to paper to prove it (or so the story goes). The result was a novel titled UNDER THE MOONS OF MARS. He submitted it to *All-Story* magazine, and it was serialized there in 1912; later it was issued in book form with a new title: A PRINCESS OF MARS. An entire series eventually grew from it.

That's another Burroughs trademark. He had a penchant for writing protracted sagas which extend over numerous volumes—a tendency shared by Edward Stratemeyer, Jr., a hack who produced the Hardy Boys, Nancy Drew, and a multitude of other juvenile series under various pseudonyms, and who is responsible virtually single-handedly for the equation of series novels with children's literature in the eyes of school teachers and critics everywhere.

All told, ERB wrote approximately 70 novels during his life. At various periods he owned his own movie production company, and—by buying up real estate in the Los Angeles area—he became a wealthy land magnate: a town, now a suburb of Los Angeles, was even named Tarzana. The offices of Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc. are still maintained there.

Burroughs had several wives and children, and left behind a tidy fortune when he died in 1950. He also left a cache of unpublished material which was not located and put into print until the early Sixties, at which time the discovery was a widely-heralded event. To date, according to a capsule biography published in recent paperback editions of his works, more than 40,000,000 copies of his books have appeared in 58 languages.

Among all those multifarious titles, THE LAND THAT TIME FORGOT is considered to be among the best he ever wrote. Comprised of three individual novelets, it was first published in hardcover in 1924, and continues to be reissued in paperback periodically. Like much of Burroughs' material, it is well-suited to visual adaptation, whether via the movie screen or the comic page, for it is a most heroic tale of high adventure.

And that's yet another Burroughs trademark. He wrote about idealism, and glorified the heroic striving of his protagonists to an extent utterly unacceptable to a modern literary clique which revels in the shortcomings, failings and ugly negativism of which the human character is capable. In this respect his work bears a kinship to that of Ayn Rand, though there is a marked contrast in that—while both authors place value upon the individual and his continual striving toward the ideal—Rand proposes a rational self-oriented responsiblity, while Burroughs embraces altruism.

Either way, the quality which seems to upset that certain sect which "legislates" literary standards for a broader highbrow public is, by the very nature of its existence, the blasphemous notion that Man is able to strive after more than the murky, self-destroying and dangerous goals of the morally-vacuous dregs that comprise "civilized" society.

And it is precisely this quality—a heroic striving after ideals coupled with a grassroots moral integrity—which should be encouraged among the moribund rank-and-file of post-Nixon youth, who may otherwise decide that the example of the former president and his aides is sufficient indication that the only way to survive is to subjugate themselves to a code of ethics entirely lacking in personal responsibility.

In many ways, that is already the attitude being subconsciously programmed into our society by the entropical minions of burgeoning socialism.

But his discussion may be getting just a little *too* far astray from a simple analysis of Edgar Rice Burroughs' work, so I'll settle for saying that his stuff is tremendously fun to read, and simultaneously valuable in offering alternate thinking patterns to a youth encased in an almost air-tight culture designed to produce a vegetable population. That is why Edgar Rice Burroughs is important far beyond the parameters normally attributed to him.

And that's why I think he has such impact.

I hope they'll still be reprinting his novels in the year 2000, and I'm sure they will—unless "popular fiction" has been rationed out of existence by then, after a serious paper shortage has carefully engineered the public into embracing such a solution.

But a pessimistic postulation like this one is a poor way to end an article on the Master of Adventure. Where there is life there is hope, or, to paraphrase Burroughs' own words—

"We still live!"

—David Anthony Kraft

MIGHTY

TARZAN ON TV

Those of you thrilled by the terrific Marvel treatment of TARZAN, LORD OF THE JUNGLE, can ease the strain between tantalizing issues of our color comics title, by tuning in your TV set on Saturday mornings for the all-new fall season of the color *Tarzan* cartoon series. We've heard the word that it adheres more closely to the authentic Edgar Rice Burroughs' version of the now-classic character, even as does our own monthly comics magazine. Produced by the friendly folks at Filmation Studios, the show airs on CBS, but you'll have to check your local listings for the exact time, Marvelites.

Meanwhile, don't miss a single magnificent episode of the amazing adaptations available from Mighty Marvel. After all, Rascally *Roy Thomas* and Big *John Buscema* are doing their best to bring you all-out adventure in the time-honored Burroughs' tradition!

BETWEEN THE LINES

You've no doubt heard that exasperating exhortation to "read between the lines," right, fellow FOOM fanatics? Well, now you can *see* BETWEEN THE LINES, too! The movie, that is. It's a feature flick about a *Village Voice*-type tabloid, and the trials and travails of the staff during shennanigans of all kinds (several Bullpen stalwarts identified with some of the situations showcased in the film). And, while you're scanning the silver screen, True Believers, be sure to look for the mildly mind-boggling Mighty Marvel comics covers adorning the office walls—after all, what story about a beleagured comtemporary chronicle of the youth culture would be complete without at least visual acknowledgement of the fun phenomenon that is the modern Marvel Age of Comics! See ya at the next show, folks!

Note: **We're just so blamed busy here at the Bullpen that sometimes Mighty Marvel news items slip right past us—so if you see anything that might deserve mention here, please pass it along to us, and earn our undying gratitude as well as a plug in these very pages. Thanks, FOOMers!**

MARVEL MINI-ITEMS

CAPTAIN AMERICA CAFE

Not so very long ago, while Cheerful *Chris Claremont* paid a pleasurable visit to merry ol' England, he was taken aback and thoroughly wog-boggled in his wanderings when he stumbled upon an unusual example of the vast Marvel influence—an eatery erected in honor of and named after our very own stateside super-hero, *Captain America!* Yes, it's true. See for yourselves, from the Marvelous menu reproduced above, frantic FOOMers—and remember to always keep your eyes peeled for further proof of the widespread web of cultural clout wielded by Mighty Marvel!

THORNE THE THAUMATURGE

When we raved about the red-haired rapscallion known as Red Sonja a couple issues ago, we truly had no idea of the awesome extent to which popularity and enthusiasm have pushed Marvel's sensational superstar! The success of the sword-wielding super-heroine has spawned Sonja T-shirts, Sonja buttons, Sonja posters and Sonja records—as well as the Sonja Comics Convention we made modest mention of in that earlier issue of FOOM. And the man behind much of the mania is Fantastic *Frank Thorne*, the selfsame scribbler who lovingly illustrates each and every issue of the colorful RED SONJA comic book!

According to Frank, "Sona has driven me daft!" Indeed, his passion for the pulchritudinous princess has carried him to regions alien to the quiet studio life. Transformed into a thespian thaumaturge by his zeal for the mighty mistress, Frank has recruited various Sonja lookalikes from the ranks of actresses and models, and has taken to performing with them at various frantic public functions. In addition, he has been doing television and radio appearances, bringing the Sonja Story to an ever-wider audience. One of his radio interviews is being syndicated nationally on the Public Broadcasting System's "Voices in the Wind," a program on the arts in America.

As well as being an established *illustrator extraordinaire*, Frank is also a former stage magician, and utilizing his illusionary acumen he has evolved a wild and entirely unique divertissment, consisting of himself as a Wizard engaging in a zany mixture of incantations, swordplay, exotic dance and huggermuggery with Red Sonja. He calls it the *Sonjashow*, and he takes it from convention to convention, reveling in his newfound notoriety. He now gets as much fan mail in a day as he used to get in a month!

"It is a once in a lifetime thing for me," Frank is always quick to add, "and I'm having the time of my life."

MARVEL POCKET BOOKS

If you're at all accustomed to frequenting the paperback section of your local bookstore, it's a cinch that you've probably already seen several of our nifty new pocketsize collections of classic early Marvel Comics stories, permanently bound for reference and for riotous re-reading, as well. But if not—if, instead, you're one of the unfortunate few who are still unaware of this fantastic phenomenon—we're gonna tell ya about it here, so that you can rush right out and round up a handful of happy-go-lucky tomes (destined to become cherished treasury items in absolutely no time at all).

Published by Pocket Books, each pandemonious paperback contains just under a half dozen *complete* classics in chronological order, starting from the sensational collector's item first issues, and the two featured series so far to receive this royal treatment are SPIDER-MAN and the FANTASTIC FOUR. And, as if all the aforementioned isn't enough, these trippy tomes are in *color*, too! A better bargain just couldn't be offered by anyone, and we did it all for you, Marvelite!

to BARSOOM and BACK with

by Sam Moskowitz

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"*Tarzan, Lord of the Jungle,* is the great romance of the present day, surpassing in its popular appeal even the *She* and *King Solomon's Mines* of Rider Haggard's yesterday and the *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* of Jules Verne's days before that," wrote editors Edwin Balmer and Donald Kennicott in the November 1927 issue of *Blue Book Magazine*.

"The touch of the great romances of tradition . . . is in *Tarzan,*" they continued. ". . . The reader feels himself also partly the writer. He himself joins in the story-telling and calls upon his own imagination to share in the delightful business of creating romance. And that's just about the best fun there is."

Edgar Rice Burroughs, principally as a result of his creation of the by now almost mythical character Tarzan, far outstripped Jules Verne, H. Rider Haggard, and H. G. Wells in catching public favor. Some of the Tarzan novels qualify rather obviously as science fiction—*Tarzan and the Ant Men* and *Tarzan at the Earth's Core* to name two—but the spirit of science fiction underlies the entire series.

It is not necessary to rely upon borderline elements in the Tarzan series to establish Burrough's reputation in the science fiction world. The first novel Burroughs ever wrote was an interplanetary tale—*Dejah Thoris, Princess of Mars.* It was literally a transcription on paper of daydreams engaged in by the author to divorce himself from the cold failures of his everday life. When he coupled to this daydreaming his born gift of story-telling, these same fantasies were to act to make more bearable the problems of others.

Thomas Newell Metcalf, editor of *All-Story,* bought that first novel, which he retitled *Under the Moons of Mars* and ran as a six-part serial, beginning in the February 1912 number of his monthly. For the only time in his life, Burroughs used a pen name. *Under the Moons of Mars* bore the by-line "Norman Bean," a typesetter's corruption of "Normal Bean," with which Burroughs had intended to imply that though the story was mad the author was not.

So we see that Edgar Rice Burroughs' earliest dreams were centered on a world forty million miles beyond ours, Mars, whose red disk at the turn of the century had become a favorite topic of astronomical discussion. The impetus for this interest was provided by Professor Percival Lowell's famous book, *Mars As an Abode of Life.* In that book, Lowell advanced the hypothesis that Mars was probably a much older world than ours, and that at one period in the past it may have supported a high order of civilization. That the so-called canals were actually artificial waterways created by highly intelligent creatures, was, of course, his major premise.

Burroughs' Martian novels, for eleven of them followed that first one, are framed against the background of a planet in decadence, where the great civilization of the past has given way to hundreds of diverse cultures, the product of a variety of semihuman tribal groupings, who carry on a senseless, violent, and never-ending struggle against one another as a way of life. It is a world where savagery and science live side by side and where the strength of a man's swordarm counts for as much as the achievements of science in the struggle for survival and power.

It might seem a bizarre world, if it did not bear a satiric resemblance to the one we live in. The endless contest of strength and cunning in Burroughs' Mars is no more pointless and illogical than the military history of mankind, or adventures of Ulysses. In fact, Burroughs' science fiction is a direct descendant of the travel tale typified by the *Odyssey.* It is the traditional romance brought up to date with the addition of a few modern scientific trimmings.

This variety of science fiction has become known as "scientific romance." In such stories, colorful adventure of the classical kind is seasoned with just enough science to lend wonder and enchantment to the background and locale. Edgar Rice Burroughs was to become the acknowledged master of the scientific romance, and the rousing enthusiasm that greeted his first novel was to usher in the golden era of escape science fiction. Indeed, the scientific romance was to dominate science fiction until the appearance in 1926 of the first magazine devoted specifically to science fiction and to remain a factor for ten years beyond that date.

There were a number of reasons for this. First, Burroughs *completely* divorced the reader from association with reality and carried him off to a never-never world of his own creating. Second, Burroughs was a natural story-teller. His style never jarred. It flowed along, quickly and smoothly, catching the reader up in the spell of the story. Rarely was the reader called upon to think. Whatever "messages" appeared in the story were essential to the narrative, there was no sermonizing, no separation of theme, no clearly didactic pointing out of lessons to be learned.

Burroughs had an unsurpassed sense of pace, and his ability to keep several situations moving simultaneously, coupled with his mastery of the flashback technique, established him as an authentic literary craftsman.

And by far most important, Burroughs could make characters come full-bodily alive from the page, and achieve a maximum of reader identification. This was impressively evident in his initial Mars novel, where first-person narration offered easy identification with John Carter, enabling the reader to share closely with him wondrously thrilling and romantic adventures. Particularly vivid is the memorable scene in the Mars air-

EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS

manufacturing plant, the fate of the entire planet resting upon the telepathic ability of John Carter to open the doors and permit a Martian to crawl in and restart the stalled air machinery.

This talent for apt characterization was to provide a firm foundation for Burroughs' fame. He would have been a successful author if he had written the Mars stories alone. But the creation of the character Tarzan in *Tarzan of the Apes,* his second published novel, which appeared in the October 1912 issue of *All-Story,* elevated him to literary greatness and world renown.

According to Alva Johnson, in his article *Tarzan, or How to Become a Great Writer,* published in the July 29, 1939 issue of *The Saturday Evening Post,* Rudyard Kipling was a great fan of the Tarzan stories, believing that they were inspired by his own *Jungle Tales.*

If the influence of any writer can be strongly discerned in the theme and style of *Tarzan of the Apes,* it would seem to be that of Kipling. But Burroughs stoutly and vigorously denied this. He has been quoted as saying: "I started my thoughts on the legend of Romulus and Remus who had been suckled by a wolf and founded Rome, but in the jungle I had my little Lord Greystoke suckled by an ape."

Characterization in Burroughs' novels was not confined to the lead character. Read a Tarzan story and the very lions, leopards, elephants, apes, and monkeys come to life as distinct personalities in their own right. The effect is heightened by giving the jungle creatures names and identifying their peculiarities. There was the female ape who mothered Tarzan, Kala, and her mate, Tublat. They even had family quarrels over raising Tarzan. Numa was the lion and Sabor the lioness, Histah the great snake, and Tantor the elephant. Through the magic of Burroughs' pen, all come into being as three-dimensional fictional people.

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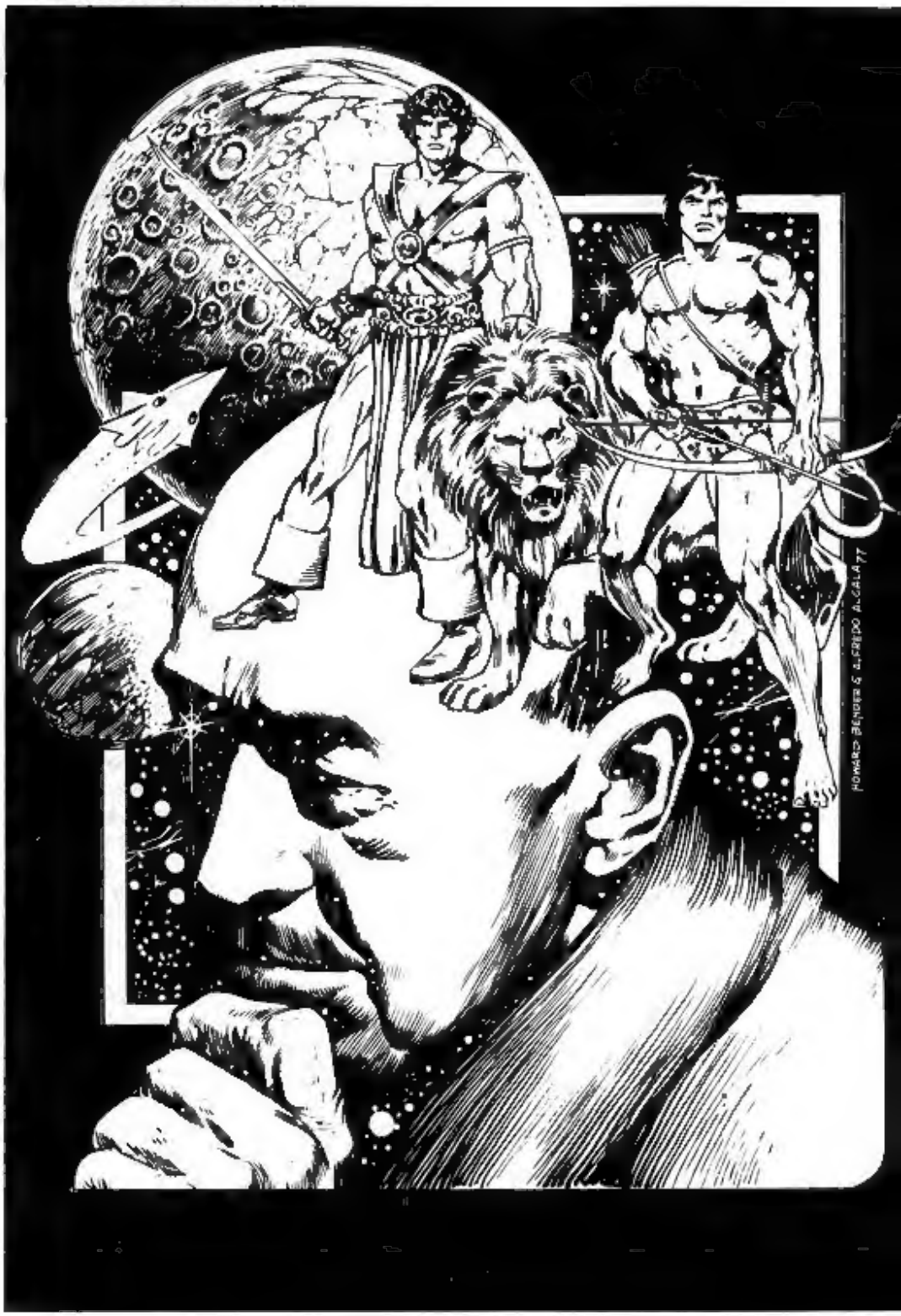

Of all the literature mankind has ever produced from its imagination, only Sherlock Holmes is nearly as well known as Tarzan. And *Tarzan of the Apes* is a great and fabulous adventure epic. The development of the story is inspired. The young English couple who are cast away on the shores of the Dark Continent . . . the child who is born to them in a primitive cabin . . . their deaths . . . the female ape, Kala, who finds and raises the child with all the patience and love of a human mother . . . the self-education of the ape-boy Tarzan as he grows to manhood . . . his encounters with human beings . . . his love for the American girl Jane Porter and, finally, his act of self-sacrifice when he steps aside to let William Cecil Clayton, a British nobleman, marry her, add up to one of the world's great romances, which ends with his rival for the girl asking:

"If it's any of my business, how the devil did you ever get into the bally jungle?"

"I was born there," said Tarzan, quietly. "My mother was an Ape, and of course she couldn't tell me much about it. I never knew who my father was."

This was no corn, no Pollyanna-ish cliché. The hero does not get the girl. The novel ends on a realistic and powerful back-to-earth note. As a concession to readers, Tarzan does get Jane at the end of the sequel, *The Return of Tarzan,* but the artistry of the first story remains unimpaired.

With *All-Story* readers of *Under the Moons of Mars* frantic about whether the atmosphere plant on Mars had been put back into operation in time to save the planet, Burroughs wrote a sequel, *Gods of Mars.* It was signed with his own name this time and ran for five monthly installments, beginning in the January 1913 issue of the magazine.

After learning that Mars had been saved, the readers sat back to revel in an even more enthralling series of adventures which culminated in a cliff-hanger of movie-serial intensity. The book ends with Dejah Thoris, queen of Helium, most beautiful woman of the planet Mars and beloved wife of John Carter, trapped in a revolving chamber with two other women, Thuvia and Phaidor.

The chamber, which revolves deep in the earth and permits entrance for only one day in a Martian year—almost twice as long as our terrestrial year—moves out of sight as Phaidor, who has developed a jealous passion for Carter, dagger in hand, lunges at Dejah Thoris. Thuvia bravely attempts to slip between them. As the chapter and the book ends, the chamber closes and John Carter will not know for an entire Martian Year whether his beloved has died under the knife of her murderous assassin.

Burroughs' first Mars novel, published in 1912, brought him less than a third of a cent per word, or $400. His second Mars novel, published a year later and shortly after *Tarzan of the Apes,* brought many times that sum. Before the appearance of his first hard-cover book, *Tarzan of the Apes,* published by A. C. McClurg in 1914, he was earning twenty thousand a year from magazine sales alone.

Tarzan of the Apes proved a runaway best-seller, accounting for almost a million book sales under the McClurg imprint and many others when it went into A. L. Burt and Grosset & Dunlap lower-priced reprints. These rewards came to Burroughs after he had attempted a score of jobs and businesses and considered himself a complete failure.

Edgar Rice Burroughs was born in Chicago, September 1, 1875. His father, a manufacturer of electric batteries, sent him to a number of private schools. He flunked entrance exams for West Point and gave up hope of a military career. At the age of twenty-five he married Emma Centennia Hulbert and went to work in his father's battery plant at fifteen dollars a week. In the next ten years he tried a succession of jobs and enterprises, including clerk, cowboy, railroad policeman, gold miner, and shop-owner. He failed likewise at a series of selling jobs but he is said to have ghost-written a book, shortly before he made his first fiction sale, on how to be a success in business.

The fact that he did not make his mark until the age of thirty-five has been pointed to by Burroughs as proof of his ineptness in business matters. The facts do not bear him out. It is doubtful if any writer in the history of literature earned more money than Burroughs. Before his death, he admitted to having assembled an estate worth over ten million.

The adroitness with which he merchandised his products, successfully obtaining magazine, book, reprint, newspaper syndicate, radio, cartoon, and motion-picture sales for the greater part of them, in addition to the new Tarzan movies released annually, indicated busines ability of the highest order. While he never undersold himself he never priced himself out of the market either. He was an easy man to do business with, agreeing without pressure to changes deemed necessary to adapt his work to various media.

An editor could revise a Burroughs story for magazine publication and never hear a word of complaint from the author. However, the hard-cover edition would always contain Burroughs' original version. A comparison of hard cover with magazine versions of his stories reveals few instances where the editor was right in tinkering with the proven formula of a superlative story-teller who, in the final analysis, knew better what the public wanted than any other writer—or editor—of the first half of the twentieth century.

With the publication of *Tarzan the Invincible* in 1931, he formed his own publishing company, Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc., situated in Tarzana, California, a town named after his most famous character. Though it was begun during a period of bitter national depression, the venture proved well starred. Burroughs was to demonstrate that he was a better businessman than his previous publishers when, in 1949, he reissued ten of the Tarzan series to which he owned book rights, plus the entire Mars and Venus series, as one dollar reprints.

Other publishers, following the fashion of literary thought prevalent at the period, claimed that the mood of the times had left such works behind. As orders poured into Tarzana, Burroughs, almost with a humble note of astonishment, told a reporter for *Writer's Digest,* "The books are selling better than ever."

The Gods of Mars was followed in 1913 by *The Cave Girl,* a Jack London-ish novel in which a skinny, overprotected Bostonian is stranded on a Pacific Island where a primitive cave culture still exists. Casting off the veneer of civilization, he rebuilds himself into a Tarzan-like character, survives, and wins for his mate a beautiful cave girl. *A Man Without a Soul,* which was first published in *All-Story* in 1913 and later appeared in trade book form as *The Monster Men* (1929), deals with the creation of synthetic humans through the use of tissue-culture. It is unquestionably one of the pioneer stories of its

TARZAN AND THE GOLDEN LION
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type and Burroughs later used the theme in *The Synthetic Men of Mars*, first published in *Argosy*, January 7 to February 1, 1939, in four weekly installments.

The skillfully executed *The Eternal Lover*, a tale of a prehistoric man who falls into a state of suspended animation and wakes to find himself on Tarzan's estate in Africa, was Burroughs' first offering for 1914, and was followed a month later by *At the Earth's Core*, the novel which began the Pellucidar series. This exciting story, first published in *All-Story Weekly*, April 4 to April 25, in four weekly installments, postulated that the center of the earth was hollow, and its interior another world—heated and lighted by the molten core of the earth which hung suspended like a sun at its center. It was an ideal setting for marvelous adventure and Burroughs was eventually to write six sequels: *Pellucidar* (*All-Story Cavalier Weekly*, May-June 1915), *Tanar of Pellucidar* (*Blue Book*, March-April 1929), *Tarzan at the Earth's Core*, *Back to the Stone Age*, *The Land of Terror*, and *The Return to Pellucidar*. *The Land of Terror* has appeared only in book form and is one of the rarest of all Burroughs novels. *The Return to Pellucidar* appeared as three complete short stories in *Amazing Stories*, the title story February 1942, *Men of the Bronze Age* March 1942, and *Tiger Girl* April 1942.

The critics, judging Edgar Rice Burroughs by absolute literary standards, have never been kind. They have pointed out that his plots are repetitious and his prose often hasty, with an overwhelming emphasis on action and violence and a seemingly pointless procession of incidents rather than a completely co-ordinated whole. Most sternly they condemn the lack of significance for our times in the themes forming the essential framework of his efforts.

Burroughs never denied the charges and with almost a note of apology explained that it was his purpose to write for those who desired entertainment and escape, that he expected his works to be judged by that standard. He noted that his books were clean without being prudish and while he did not know if they had potentialities for good, he was sure that no one had been harmed by them. The near-farce of 1962, when a western school board banned and then reinstated the Tarzan books on the ground that Tarzan and Jane were never legally married might have amused Burroughs, though precision requires noting that he carefully had married them.

The truth is somewhat removed from either the viewpoint or Burroughs' claims. As to literary worth, it seems likely that *Tarzan of the Apes*, at least, will be printed and read long after many books "with pointed messages for our times" have been forgotten.

As food for thought: Burroughs did try to convey a message of social import on many significant subjects. *The Mucker*, published in *All-Story* in 1914, deals with the influence of environment on character. Billy Byrne was Burroughs' Studs Lonigan, raised on the rough West Side of Chicago. "There was scarce a bartender who Billy did not know by his first name . . . he knew the patrolman and plainclothesmen equally as well, but not so pleasantly."

For at least half its length *The Mucker* is a revelation of the power Burroughs was capable of commanding when dealing with grim realism instead of escape. *The Girl from Hollywood*, originally published in *Munsey's Magazine* from June to November, 1922, is a straight-from-the-shoulder exposé of drug addiction in the film capital; *The Oakdale Affair*, which first appeared in *Blue Book* for March 1918, forcefully

dramatizes the author's disgust at mob violence and lynching; *The Girl from Farris's* (*All-Story Weekly*, September 23 to October 14, 1916) has as its central theme prostitution; *The Efficiency Expert*, from *Argosy-All Story*, October 8 to 29, 1921, is a prototype of the novel of behind-the-scenes-doings in big business, along lines of the much-later *Executive Suite;* and *The Outlaw of Torn* (*New Story*, January to May 1914) is as carefully researched a historical novel of the age of chivalry as you are likely to read anywhere.

All of which proves that Burroughs was far from being a writer without social conscience. It was simply that he discovered that other authors could play that role with greater impact than he. To refuse to recognize that fact and waste the great talent he possessed for entertaining millions would have been pointless.

Absolute literary standards apart, judged by their own standards, two Burroughs novels are most frequently nominated by science fiction devotees as established classics. Those two are *The Moon Maid*, a trilogy collected into a single book in 1926, and *The Land That Time Forget*, another trilogy which appeared as a single volume in 1924.

The means of interplanetary travel in the early novels of Mars were so ill-defined as to border on the mystical, but in *The Moon Maid* the Mars of John Carter supplies earth by radio with the plans for constructing a spaceship which functions on reaction principles. Led by a renegade earthman, the people of the moon invade and devastate the earth. Primitive earth societies evolve in the wilderness and, eventually, the descendants of the Americans drive the moon men from the North American continent. Though some of the science is dated today, the scenes depicting the reconstruction of civilization are superbly conceived.

The Land That Time Forgot tells of the discovery of a giant island in the South Pacific where prehistoric creatures still survive. There are also seven species of human beings, in various stages of evolutionary development. In a single lifetime, each of these creatures evolves from a point a little higher than the ape to humanity, comparable to modern man. This concept is highly original, and most other elements of the book are as well thought out and effectively developed.

Burroughs' early Martian stories all went into hard cover. *Under the Moons of Mars* became *A Princess of Mars*, to be followed by *The Gods of Mars, The Warlord of Mars, The Chessmen of Mars*, and *Thuvia, Maid of Mars*. All were rollicking, swashbuckling scientific romances in the grand tradition. None displayed too careful a regard for scientific accuracy until the appearance of *The Master Mind of Mars*. This novel was first published complete in *Amazing Stories Annual*, 1927.

The title and the author's name were featured on the cover in larger letters than the magazine's own title. *Amazing Stories Annual* was intended to test the feasibility of publishing a companion to *Amazing Stories* and a big name was needed to help put it over. Gernsback had previously reprinted *The Land That Time Forgot* in *Amazing Stories* and claimed that all he did to obtain *The Master Mind of Mars* was to write Burroughs asking him for a novel with some good scientific thought behind it.

Except for the opening scene, where the story's hero, Ulysses Paxton, is *wished* to Mars, the inventions and machinations of Ras Thavas, Martian scientific genius, are meticulously described. The novel also contains surprising philosophical passages. It is difficult to believe that Burroughs wrote this novel specially for Gernsback, yet it is even harder to conceive of *Argosy—All-Story* or *Blue Book* rejecting it merely because it was more thoughtful than the others. Certainly not *Blue Book*, which during this very period thought nothing of giving *six* covers, one for each installment, for a serialization of an Edgar Rice Burroughs novel—which occurred not once but several times. It was in *Blue Book* that the majority of Burroughs' novels were printed in their first magazine appearance. What is probably close to the truth is that Burroughs, a good businessman and skillful professional, would not decline a good offer from anyone and would write to order for a guaranteed sale.

Of great interest is the serialization of *Tarzan and the Lion Man* in *Liberty Magazine*, beginning with the November 11, 1933 number. *Liberty*, then one of the three leading weekly slicks, along with *The Saturday Evening Post* and *Collier's*, solicited this story from Burroughs. The style is slick-magazine throughout. The novel is loaded with dialogue, often good dialogue. The sentences are direct and modern and crisp. The book version does not differ from the magazine's—a good bet that it was Burrough's original.

Considering the fabulous popularity of Tarzan, why did Burroughs bother to write anything else? Of the fifty-nine books published during his lifetime, twenty-four featured Tarzan. Burroughs has been quoted as claiming thirty-five million sales for all of his hard-cover books in North America alone. Of this number, he credited only fifteen million sales to Tarzan. The thirty-five other books accounted for another twenty million sales, an average of better than half a million copies per title. While we know a few to have been "lemons," we can see where his science fiction tales of Mars, Venus, and Pellucidar must have enjoyed greater popularity and profit than is generally believed.

During World War II, though in his sixties, Burroughs served as a war correspondent; the strain resulted in several heart attacks. Ill almost to the point of becoming a semi-invalid, he knew that he did not have long to live. In the foreword to *Llana of Gathol*, probably the best written of all the Martian books—it was published just before his death in March 1950—John Carter, the character who first brought his creator success, reappears to Burroughs. Here is the episode in the author's own words:

"I never expected to see you again."

"No, I never expected to return."

"Why have you; It must be something important."

"Nothing of Cosmic Importance," he said, smiling, "but important to me, nevertheless. You see, I wanted to see you."

"I appreciate that," I said.

"You see, you are the last of my earthly kind whom I know personally. Every once in a while I feel an urge to see you and visit with you, and at long intervals I am able to satisfy that urge—as now. After you are dead, and it will not be long now, I shall have no Earthly ties—no reason to return to the scenes of my former life."

"There are my children," I reminded him. "They are your blood kin."

"Yes," he said, "I know; but they might be afraid of me. After all, I might be considered something of a ghost by Earth men."

"Not by my children," I assured him. "They know you quite as well as I. After I am gone, see them occasionally."

He nodded. "Perhaps I shall," he half promised. *

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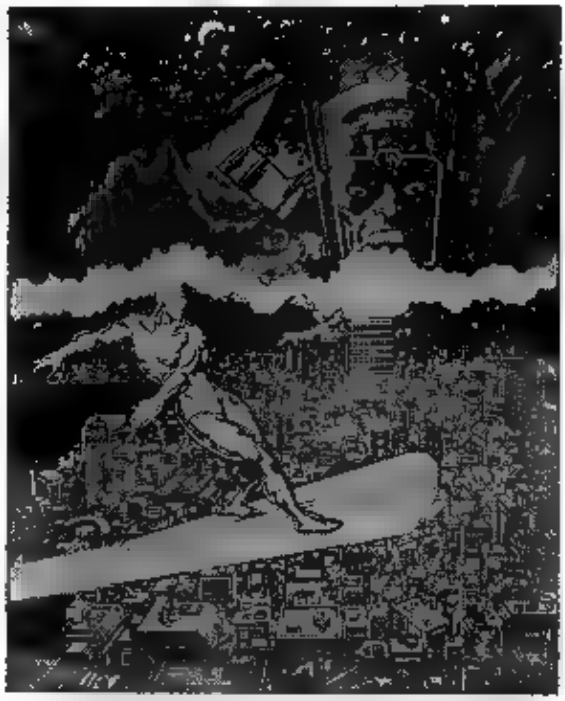

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The Foom interview:

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on

JOHN CARTER WARLORD OF MARS™

Conducted by David Anthony Kraft and D. Jon Zimmerman

FOOM: When were you first exposed to the works of Edgar Rice Burroughs?

MARV: When Ballantine Books first released them in paperback in the early Sixties. For some reason, I picked up the John Carter series, I guess because I was a science fiction fan. I really loved him. I was about 17 or 18 then, when the paperbacks hit the stands. I really loved the first five Martian novels, and then my interest started to wane. I'm not a very big Tarzan fan, I don't enjoy jungle characters. I liked the first novel and JUNGLE TALES OF TARZAN, but not many more. One or two of the others are some of the silliest things I have ever read. For instance, the first Korak story, THE SON OF TARZAN, has the son going back to Africa, and he disguises his friend, an ape, as his grandmother—and nobody questions this big, hairy thing! My sense of reality just doesn't accept things like that. But when I first read the Carter material, I really liked it. Burroughs was a storyteller, and you get enthusiastic about his stuff. The first John Carter book, A PRINCESS OF MARS, has virtually no dialogue in the whole book, yet there's something compelling about it. He was able to create this entire world which is astonishing. It's so perfectly worked out, and it has a strong forward thrust to it. I read five of the books without stopping. Then, the series got less interesting, since Carter wasn't in most of the books after that.

FOOM: Do you think that this previous interest in John Carter has helped you in writing the comic book?

MARV: I would not have taken on the assignment if I did not like the character. When DC did the series, I went after it because I did like John Carter. Based on that, I was supposed to script the comic book Carter series for Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc., themselves, when they were planning to package and publish their own line of comics. Consequently, when Marvel got the rights, I asked for the assignment, again because I like the character. So, if I was not a fan of the stuff, I would not have gone after the comic-book scripting—so, obviously, it helped in that sense.

FOOM: How exactly did you become scripter of Marvel's JOHN CARTER?

MARV: I had done it for DC, and I had a script prepared for Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc., as well. I had plotted the first story, of which three pages were drawn, at the point when they decided to license the rights to Marvel. Roy Thomas knew that, someday, we would do the Burroughs material, and so he'd had it written into his contract that he would get to write both TARZAN and JOHN CARTER. But he knew that I was a big John Carter fan, having written it before,

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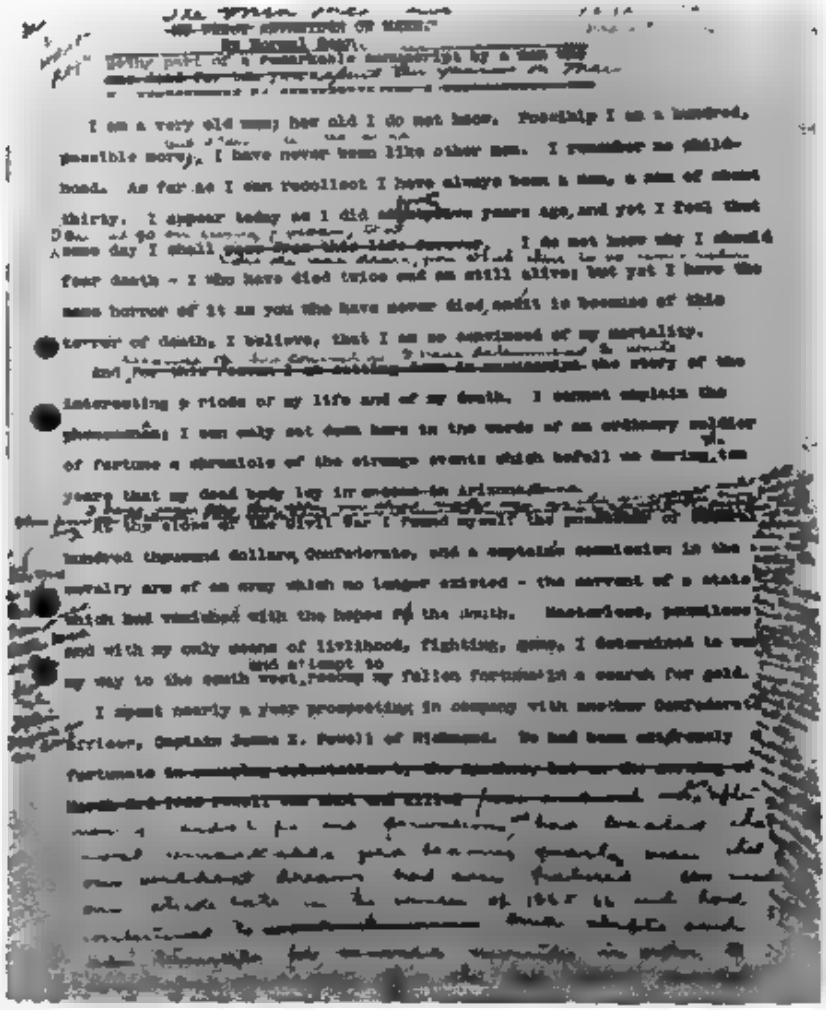
and that I wanted to write it again, so he relinquished the series to me

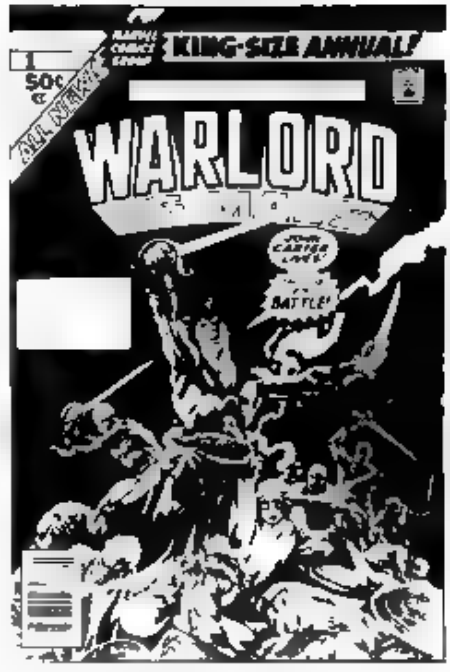
In fact, when we got the rights, Stan called Roy, who mentioned that I was interested in writing the JOHN CARTER strip And, if he hadn't, I would have mentioned it anyway (laughter).

FOOM: How did you come about choosing Gil Kane as the artist?

MARV: Originally, Gil wasn't the artist There was quite a mix-up Last year was a big convention year for me—I was going to all of them. When Marvel got the ERB rights, I was at the San Diego Con. That's where we were called up and told about it Three weeks later, I was at a science fiction convention in Kansas City, and I got the word that they needed a script immediately, at that very minute, as everything at Marvel always has to be done. So I said, "Why don't you just take the plot I did for Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc., and give it to an artist? Just pick anyone who's



First page of manuscript of "Under the Moons of Mars," original manuscript was written longhand.



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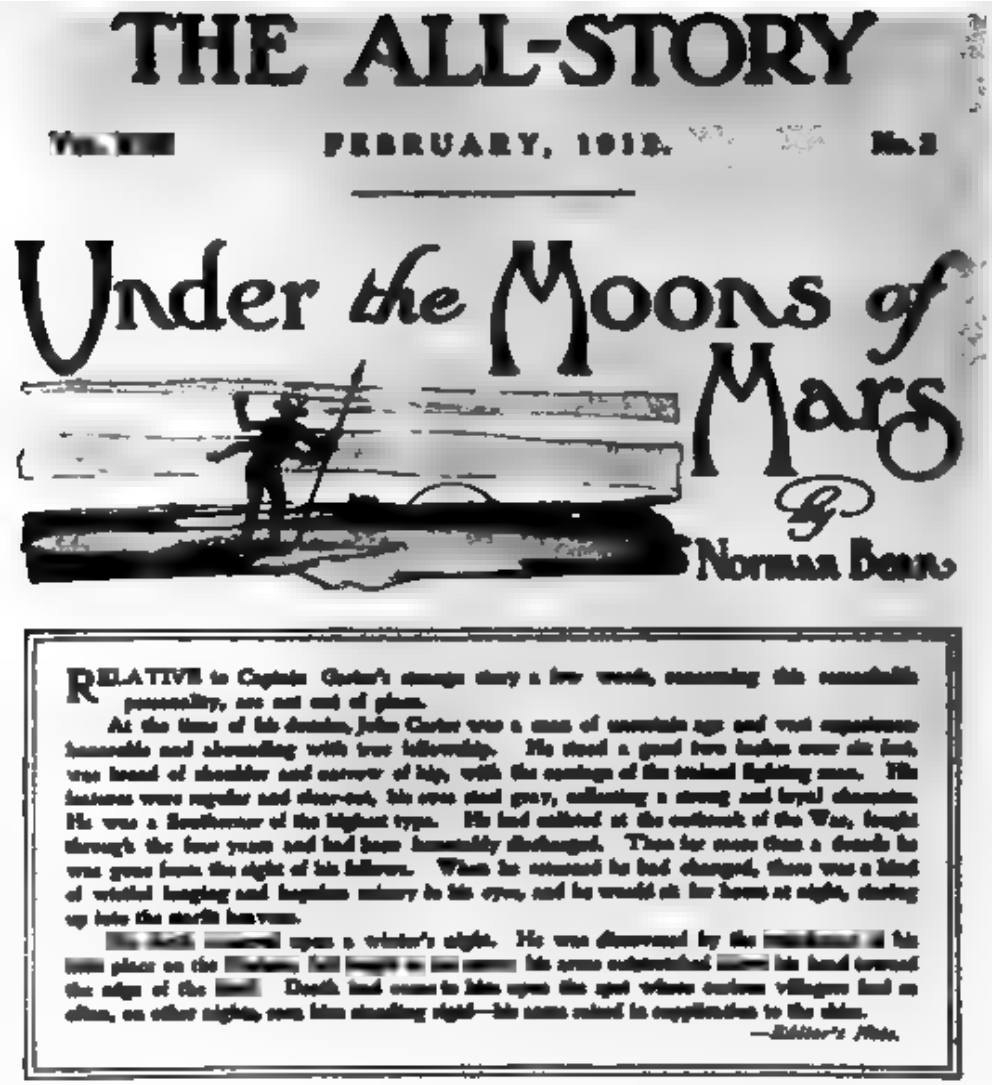
available, you know." Alex Nino was available, so he did it, but it didn't work out. Nino is this beautiful designer with incredibly bizarre layouts, and he does stuff I really love, when I was writing DR. STRANGE, I would have loved to have had him work on it But he was stifling his own talents on JOHN CARTER, trying to draw in a style that just wasn't his So that didn't work out. And, by the time it came in, there was no rush, anyway—because the contracts had still not been signed. Knowing that we were going to get another artist, I sat down and plotted what I really wanted as the first story. You see, ERB, Inc., had wanted the material to be aimed at a young audience, so the story I'd plotted for them was very simplistic and straightforward And that's not the way I wanted to do it at Marvel. I wanted subplots and all sorts of ups and downs So I replotted it, and while were looking for an artist, Roy said that he had always wanted to work on it with Gil Back when I was doing fanzines, when I was in my mid-teens, I mentioned that Gil happened to be my favorite action artist—I've always loved his stuff There are few artists working today that I've always really liked; Carmine Infantino, Gil Kane, and Ross Andru were the ones I was most familiar with. Gil happened to be in the office, and I asked him, "Hey, would you like to do JOHN CARTER?" He jumped up and down—he desperately wanted that


THE ALL-STORY
FEBRUARY, 1912.
Under the Moons of Mars
By
Norman Bean
RELATIVE to Captain Carter's strange story a few words, concerning this remarkable personality, are not out of place.
—Editor's Note.

© 1912 Frank A Munsey Co
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strip; it was definitely a strip that *he* wanted, because he was always a Burroughs fan. So that's basically how we got him.

FOOM: Does Gil offer any input to the plots themselves?

MARV: So far, no. Primarily because, as I said, Marvel begins late By the time we signed the contract, the first issue was already late Consequently, every issue since then has also been late. For instance, we will get the printed proof of the previous issue, before we're finished with the issue that follows— which means that on a monthly series we're basically producing a book only three weeks before publication This has hurt the scripting in places, but primarily it's prevented Gil and I from really discussing it at length Of course, we've talked about it on a superficial level; we went out to lunch and discussed generalities. After issue #10, I have an issue being drawn by Dave Cockrum that flashes back to A PRINCESS OF MARS, and it's a story about how John Carter first met Dejah Thoris That'll give us a few weeks to finally sit down and work out the direction for the JOHN CARTER book. So, by issue #12, Gil will be providing an awful lot of input; but, until now, it's pretty much been that I send him a plot and he turns it out

FOOM: Is there any specific challenge to writing JOHN CARTER?

MARV: Oh yeah—several, actually One is not to make the copy too stilted, which sounds very odd, since I've been very deliberately trying to pastiche Burroughs. Victorian sentence structure. Consequently, the sentence structure is sort of an inside-out way of phrasing things. It's very alien to me and, I think, to most people In order to keep the flavor of the strip, at first, I relied very heavily on his sentence structure—but I have been slowly moving out of it ever since. Another one of the challenges of the series, as anyone who has read the John Carter books knows, is that there's very little dialog in the stories They're mostly description. Therefore, there is really no sentence structure established for John Carter's speech, because when he does talk, it's in short sentences So I had to somehow evolve a speech pattern for him, keeping that Victorian flavor, but not making it stilted, which is very difficult. I think I succeeded about half the time I'm slowly moving away from that, anyway, just to make the book easier to read. So there's a very deliberate move on my part to simplify the structure, not the content. Basically it's the character of Carter that I like Also, Carter's being ageless and timeless—virtually immortal—which is never mentioned, except in the introduction pieces that Burroughs wrote. It's a gimmick that I use in an upcoming issue.

FOOM: Do you find your scope somewhat limited, because you're dealing with an established character?

MARV: Yes and no. I'm limited in one way· by setting my stories before the events of the second novel, John Carter technically can't know anything or meet any people he hasn't met by that time. He can't meet the Black Pirates, and no one can tell him about the Black Pirates, because he makes a comment in the second novel that he has never known anyone who has ever seen one of these people before He's not met any of the various Martian races that he meets in future novels. This is a challenge I have to create a folklore; nine years worth of material. More space fantasy than science fiction. Thus, I'm trying not to concentrate on character, but on plotting. I'm finding it the hardest book I have ever had to plot We've seen eight million CONAN stories, and even though they're drastically different from Carter, they have a certain similarity, so I have to be careful there STAR WARS was based as much on Burroughs and John Carter as on anything—the banthas that they ride around the planet on are the exact same animals as on Mars I have a chance to flesh out a whole

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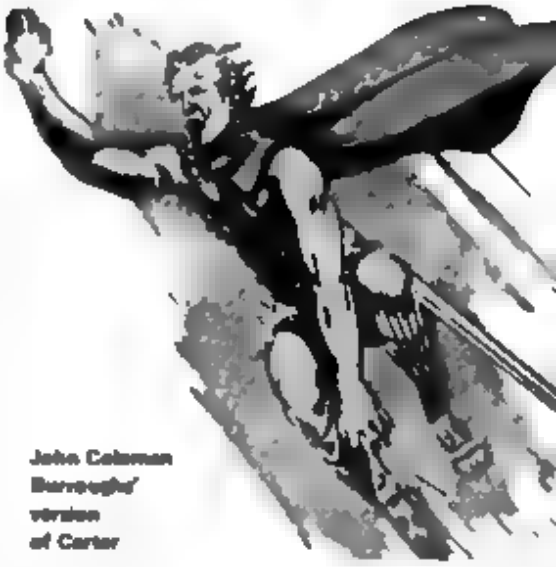
Marvel's version of Carter



John Coleman Burroughs' version of Carter

gives me sort of a challenge. I've been writing comics now for ten years, and after a while you've written virtually every line. So what you have to do is start giving yourself new challenges, and the only way I think you can give yourself a challenge is by deliberately limiting yourself. I've done that by putting John Carter in the specific time sequence, between the first and second novel, which is a ten year span. So it makes me have to work a little bit harder, and it makes the book more of a challenge to write, so that's a little bit of fun for me, as well as a challenge.

FOOM: Do you have any specific plans for JOHN CARTER?

MARV: The first ten issues are an action novel, for the most part "The Air Pirates of Mars." Characterization appears more in the last three or four issues, the early issues were rather light in characterization because, again, Burroughs was also very light on characterization. They primarily featured a lot of action, a lot of fights, and a lot of moving around on the Martian terrain. The next year's worth of books will delve much more heavily into characterization, since I'm going to try to focus on each of the characters individually. I want to do shorter stories—a couple of two parters, and then, probably, I'll go into another whole long sequence like "Air Pirates."

new adventure hero. I can have fun not having to do heavy characterization, because Carter is a fun character. He's brooding, but a more gung-ho adventure hero of the old style.

If I was dealing with my own creation, I could take him anywhere I want. But dealing with the limitations of a character like Carter

JOHN CARTER OF MARS
STRANGE GASES, SUDDENLY ERUPTING FROM THE GROUND NEAR AND FAR, HAD TURNED THESE PEOPLE TO STONE
BEFORE A GEYSER OF VAPOR, THE EARTHMAN FOUND A PIECE OF THE PRINCESS' GARMENT
EVEN AS HE WATCHED, THE MIST OBSCURED THEM. WAS HE TOO ABOUT TO BE CHANGED TO STONE?
©1941, 1978 Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc

A sample of the Forties newspaper strip Sunday page starring John Carter.

FOOM: Have you ever found yourself identifying with any of the characters in JOHN CARTER?

MARV: No. (Laughter.) I don't identify with virtually any character I write; the closest one would probably be Rich Ryder in NOVA, and even there it would be an exaggeration

FOOM: While you were a fan, did you ever dream that one day you would be writing JOHN CARTER?

MARV: No. The only thing I ever wanted to write in comics was *Superman*. Everything else has just been a matter of my being given an assignment. JOHN CARTER came around, so I asked for it, but it was one of those strange situations where, if the opportunity hadn't presented itself, I just would never have fought it out.

FOOM: What kind of feedback have you gotten?

MARV: So far, excellent including from the ERB, Inc , people

FOOM: Do they have approval?

MARV: As far as I know, they don't. I haven't been told how to handle the material or anything In fact, if I'd had to put up with serious censorship, I wouldn't have done it. And, since I didn't adapt, I can't be accused of doing a bad adaptation.

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FOOM: You did one that was an adaptation of an ERB short story How did you work?

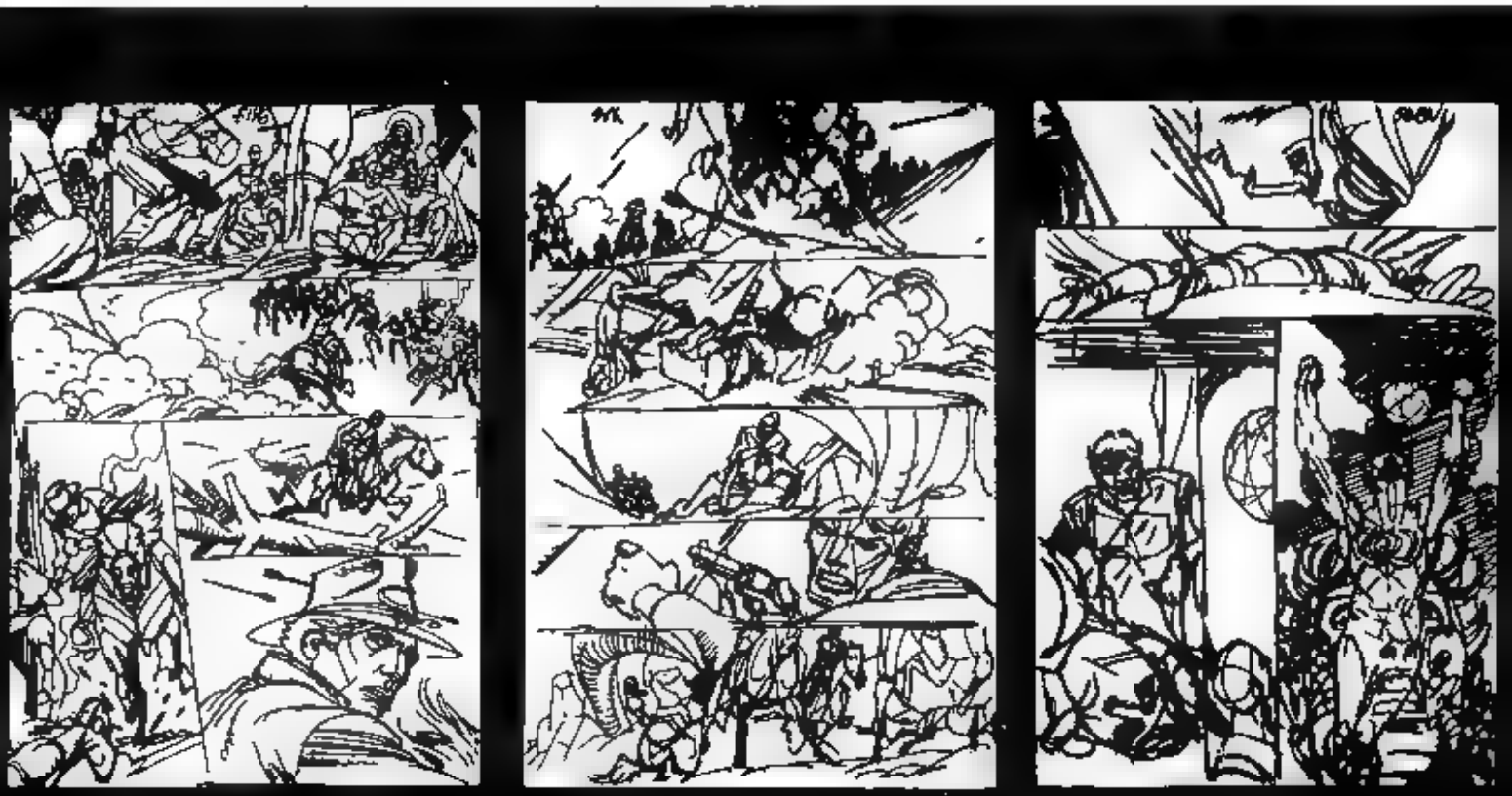
MARV: I read the story, and gave it a lot of thought as to what would need to be changed. It was one of four short stories that're in LANA OF GATHOL, the tenth of the Mars books I tried to decide what worked, and as there was no visual climax, I had to create one. I also had to remove the granddaughter, because she just appears for no reason The first seventeen pages are seventy percent Burroughs; the second half of the adaptation is about ten percent Burroughs

FOOM: Did you use any of his actual phrases?

MARV: Yes, an awful lot But I don't like doing adaptations, because it's taking the easy way out. I could have written the whole annual in one setting, if I had just adapted it straight. That's poor policy, because the reader is not getting anything he couldn't get by reading the original book

FOOM: Do you plan to stay on as scripter of the series?

MARV: I would like to, since I don't currently have any book that allows me this type of thinking I try to arrange the series I write so



A scintillatin' sample of GIL (Sugar Lips) KANE's thumbnail sketches for the first

that no two are similar. I'd hate to write SPIDER MAN, NOVA, and DAREDEVIL, all at the same time, for that very reason. NOVA is my one super-hero book, CARTER is adventure fiction; DRACULA has no resemblance to anything. SPIDER WOMAN is going to be a straight mystery-heroine; and MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE is a team-up. I don't have a solid writing style, because each book I write is so different.

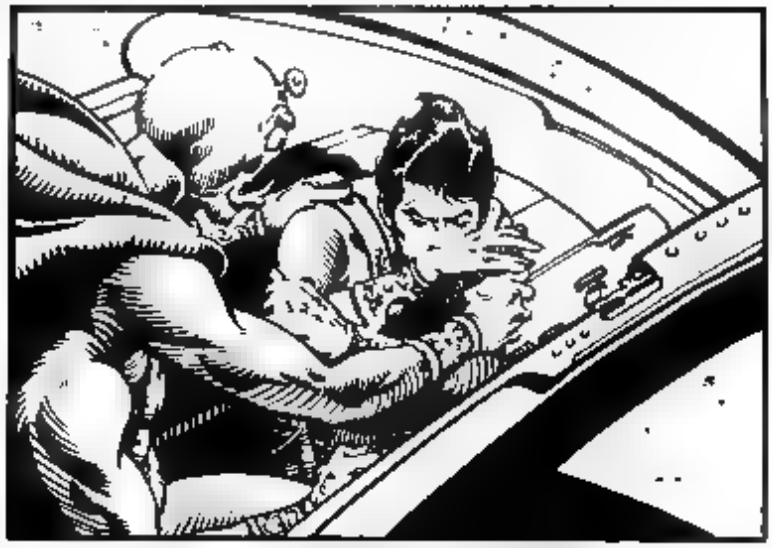
FOOM: Do you feel any unusual pressures dealing with such a famous fictional character as John Carter?

MARV: The only pressure is that there are a lot of Burroughs fans and dozens of letters come in, saying things like, "Hey, they should not wear helmets." I know that, and I also know there are no steps on Mars—they use ramps. We put in some of the helmets for identification reasons only. For instance, all Tharks look the same—whether or not they should is another question—but when they're drawn, they all look the same. And especially when they're at a distance, and you can't see the faces clearly, they definitely look alike—so Tars Tarkas has a helmet. John Carter wears clothing he shouldn't, because it's easier to identify. Of course, we could not get Dejah Thoris through the Comics Code if she was depicted as she appears in the original novel. So I'm under the gun of the Burroughs fans, who are going to crucify me for any change I make. And I mean the slightest change—whether or not the change is good. One of the things that gets to me about that is that when ERB's son, John Coleman Burroughs, was doing the John Carter newspaper strip, he had things like the Chicken-Men of Mars and the Mud-Men of Mars, all these ridiculous things. He totally changed the origin of John Carter around. And this was Burroughs' own son, and it was being done while Burroughs was alive, because even then they recognized that you had to make changes for the pictorial medium. I'm trying not to make many, but there were ten novels and I have a very bad memory, and if I happen to have claws on somebody, that's a minor thing, as long as the attitude of the strip is right. So it's difficult to appease the Burroughs fans; that's a pressure I feel. Fortunately, most of them like the direction we've taken. I have yet to get a totally negative letter about my treatment. Mostly, their complaints are on the technical level. It seems we're pleasing most of the fans. Really, I don't let it worry me too much. I'm just trying to do the best job I can on it, given the time limitations under which we have to work.

FOOM: Any comments you care to add in closing?

MARV: I just try to do my job, and make the JOHN CARTER comics entertaining and fun books, filled with action and old-fashioned romance, which is basically what the JOHN CARTER comic-book should be, I feel. I'm hoping that, as we're able to spend more time with it, we'll be able to realize some of the things that both Gil and I know should be in there. I think JOHN CARTER is basically a good book. We've had one or two issues that were bad, maybe, but for the most part, I think the series has been very good. And I think we're going to get even better as we continue in future issues of JOHN CARTER! *

fantastic Marvel issue of JOHN CARTER, WARLORD OF MARS.



Previously unpublished sample spread of JOHN CARTER as illustrated by renowned fantasy artist ALEX NINO.

The Foom interview:

Roy Thomas

on

Tarzan®

LORD OF THE JUNGLE

Conducted by David Anthony Kraft and D. Jon Zimmerman

FOOM: When did you first become interested in Tarzan?

ROY: Well, basically, my *first* exposure was to the Tarzan movies. At the age of four or five I was taken to see TARZAN'S DESERT MYSTERY, which was a Johnny Weismuller picture made during World War II, without Jane and the other Burroughs characters, of course. After that, I became an avid follower of the Weismuller and, later, of the Lex Barker Tarzan movies—but especially of the Weismuller ones. And that led me into reading the Tarzan books. I don't know exactly at what age, but I must have been about ten, I suppose. I was very fortunate in that the public library in Jackson, Missouri, was probably one of the relatively few of the small town libraries that had a fairly complete collection of the Edgar Rice Burroughs books—not just Tarzan, but John Carter, Carson of Venus, and the other ERB stories in the early editions

FOOM: What did you think about the difference between the original and the movie Tarzan?

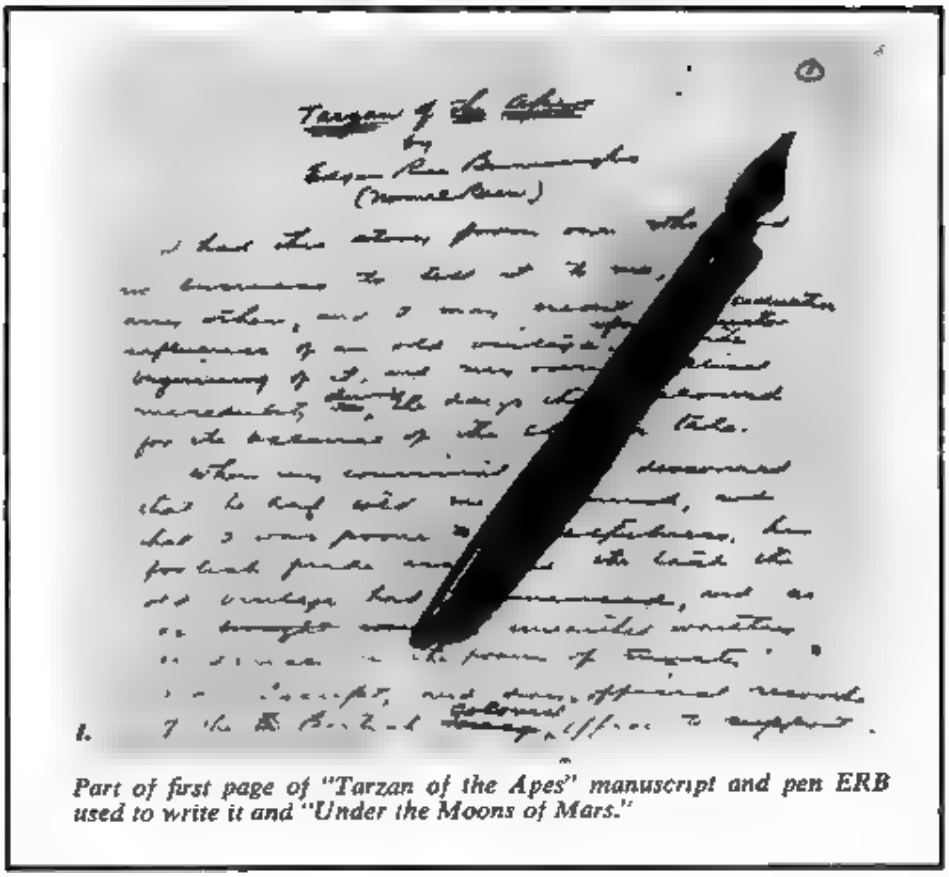
ROY: I don't know. I remember thinking about it, but I don't remember coming to any great conclusion—they just seemed like different ways of treating the same character I don't think the differences ever bothered me very much; I obviously preferred the movie version, in the early days

FOOM: What was your impression of the Tarzan comics that were on the stands at the time?

ROY: Well, not counting the reprints of the newspaper strip, Tarzan didn't appear in original stories in comic books until about 1948. So I was already 7 or 8 years old, but I remember buying the issues, and feeling that they were never as good as the movies. But I bought quite a few of the issues and enjoyed them. For some reason, I became rather enamored of the artwork of Jesse Marsh, who did the early issues of TARZAN. It looked so clear and concise that I guess, in retrospect, it just didn't look as heroic as it ought to, but I liked it anyway Jesse Marsh also did JOHN CARTER OF MARS in those days, which I also liked

FOOM: Did you ever dream that one day you would write Tarzan?

ROY: No, I never really thought about that, any more than I thought about one day writing Hawkman (which I haven't), or the Human Torch or the Sub-Mariner. I never really thought much about writing



Part of first page of "Tarzan of the Apes" manuscript and pen ERB used to write it and "Under the Moons of Mars."

TARZAN, until the last several years—especially after we picked up Conan, the Edgar Rice Burroughs material began to look like an interesting possibility. At that time, I became somewhat interested.

FOOM: Did you have anything to do with negotiating the comic book rights with Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc.?

ROY: Not this time around. The first time that Marvel approached Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc. was in 1970 or 1971, right on the heels of obtaining the Conan adaptation rights. The only thing was, back then, we were negotiating with ERB, Inc. for everything *except* Tarzan. Mainly, I guess, because Gold Key still had a TARZAN title at the time. We were negotiating, and had worked out a deal to pick out any of the other Edgar Rice Burroughs characters. And then Martin Goodman, our publisher at that time, decided at the last minute not to accept the deal we had worked out, because the sales of CONAN had dipped after the first issue. Therefore, we didn't get the rights at that time. And, of course, about a year or so later, they went over to DC with the whole thing. So we actually lost out for four or five years, because of a mistaken decision. We should have had the Burroughs material in 1971. And if we had had all the other characters, we probably would have picked up Tarzan, eventually, too. Things were kept alive, later, by Marv Wolfman, when he was the editor-in-chief of Marvel. And then, of course, suddenly the Burroughs people showed up on Marvel's doorstep last year.

FOOM: When you got the scripting assignment for the TARZAN title, did you have to do much research?

ROY: Well, I went back and reread several of the books I took a long look at Philip José Farmer's TARZAN ALIVE, which treats Tarzan as an actual historical personage. I thought it rather interesting, though not entirely useful for my purposes; but it did provide a chronology of Tarzan's adventures. And another book I was interested in, for the same reason, was Richard Lupoff's book, EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS. MASTER OF ADVENTURE

FOOM: Why did you choose to write TARZAN, as opposed to JOHN CARTER?

ROY: Actually, both series came my way, but I knew that Marv would cry a lot if he didn't get to do JOHN CARTER, WARLORD OF MARS, and since I was already doing CONAN and was going to be doing TARZAN, I figured I'd give Marv a chance. But the character that I most wanted to do, even though I love Tarzan, was John Carter. And I gave it up, because Marv had done Carter for about every other company in captivity, you know, by his own admission, and he really wanted to do it for Marvel. So I was instrumental in seeing that he got the series, and also in recommending Gil Kane as the artist. Gil and I had worked together, before, on the GULLIVAR OF MARS series, which was somewhat along the John Carter theme. The only thing was that we both left the series after only one or two issues so we never really got a chance to get it off the ground properly. What I'm hoping to do now is convince Marvel to do the other Edgar Rice Burroughs characters, so that I can adapt the Carson of Venus stories, which would be my consolation prize for not doing John Carter.

Rare first edition hardcover TARZAN.

FOOM: How did you come about choosing John Buscema to illustrate TARZAN?

ROY: Well, it was inevitable that he would be asked. He was the best choice that Marvel could offer, bar none—though there are other people who could have done it, and

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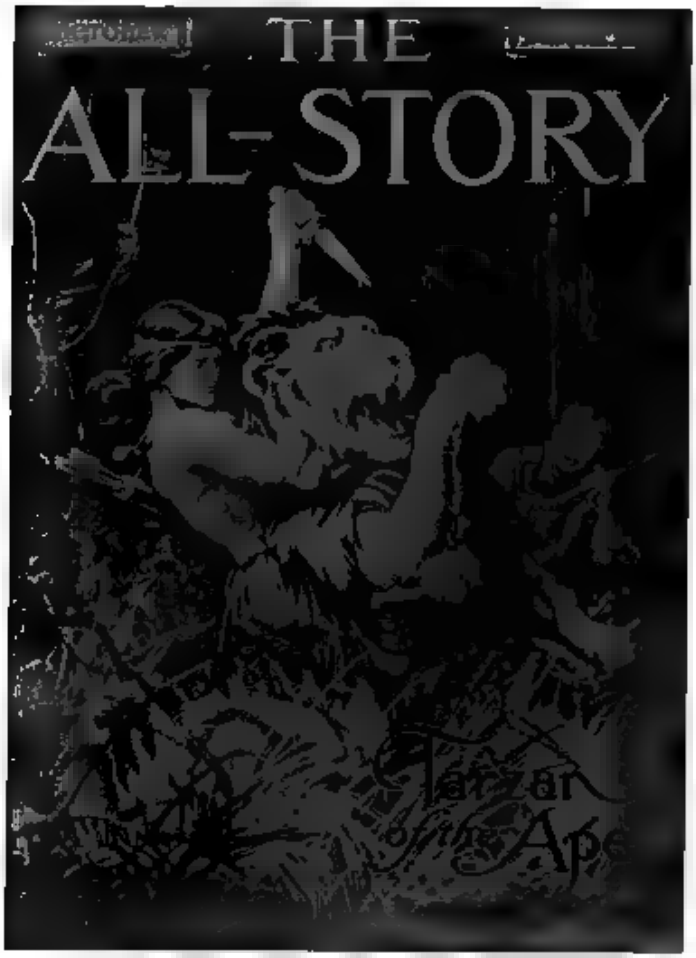


First publication of Tarzan in any form
(October 1912 issue of All-Story Magazine)

© 1977 Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc

Marvel's first publication of Tarzan
(cover based on original appearance)

probably would also have done it well. As I understand it, the Edgar Rice Burroughs people specifically mentioned myself and John Buscema, in connection with doing TARZAN. Therefore, Buscema was asked before I heard anything about it. But, of course, if he hadn't already been approached, I would have asked him anyway—he would have been my first choice. I admit that I would like to see other people—for example, Gil Kane—try their hand at illustrating TARZAN from time to time, but right about now I prefer having John do the art. Sooner or later, though, we're bound to have a fill in issue or two by another artist.

FOOM: How do you and John work together?

ROY: What I basically do is to read one of the Tarzan novels or short stories, and make sure John also has a copy of that particular book. Then I write out a several-page synopsis that tells him which episodes to turn into comics. So John reads three or four chapters of the ERB story, and then he breaks it down as I've told him to. It's rather a confusing way to work, but it does seem to work out. It's a little difficult, because with the Conan adaptations, John always preferred to have me just mark up a story with a few notes and give it to him—or tell him to just go ahead and adapt it. But, with the Tarzan material, while it's really good, there's so much repetition and so many elements that it would take three or four years just to adapt one book if we used everything. So we have to compress it quite a bit. As it is, TARZAN AND THE JEWELS OF OPAR will finish in issue #11. But, of course, we've had about three or four other issues in there that have had nothing whatever to do with THE JEWELS OF OPAR. We retold the origin in one issue; I threw stuff into the first issue that has almost nothing to do with any story; then, there are two stories from JUNGLE TALES OF TARZAN, as well, so actually it only took about seven or eight issues to adapt the novel. But had we done it really, really faithfully, it would have taken about twenty!

FOOM: Do you plan many more adaptations?

ROY: Yes. We have several more from JUNGLE TALES coming up, as fillers, but the next chronological book would be TARZAN THE TERRIBLE, since we'll be skipping TARZAN THE UNTAMED, which DC adapted. TARZAN THE TERRIBLE will eventually be very good, because it has the lost world of Pal-ul-Don in it, and all the people running around with the black tails and so forth. But that also has Jane kidnapped, and I don't really want her to be kidnapped again for another year or two, that was an overused motif in the Tarzan novels. So John and I have decided that we're going to do the novel, TARZAN AT THE EARTH'S CORE, instead, because that gives Tarzan the chance to fight against all the bizarre creatures at the center of the earth, in the world of

Pellucidar. What I'm trying to do is get Tarzan into a situation where he is not just running around killing animals and natives and so forth. That's why we're going to adapt several novels from that period; then we're going to go back to things like TARZAN THE TERRIBLE. And I do want to do some original stories, too, but my idea was to first introduce the characters I'd want to use in the adaptations, and then do new stories with them. But it will take two or three years to get a few things out of the way first. In the meanwhile, I'd like to go off and do some filler stories that are brand new.

FOOM: Do you have any particular problems currently with the TARZAN series?

ROY: Our main problem with TARZAN at the present time is that we've been unable to find a good inker who'll stay on it for a long period of time. John did a couple of issues, himself, but found that it just didn't work out. And we've had other good inkers, but for various reasons things always seem to come up. Right now, Alfredo Alcala is doing a book, Rudy Mesina did a good job on an issue recently. Tony DeZuniga did some. Steve Gan did a beautiful job on the JUNGLE TALES OF TARZAN annual this year, but would never be able to do a book a month. So that's our main problem. Plus, the fact of having a page or two less of story kind of bugs us a little bit. As you know, Marv and I work out "drop" pages, so that there are a couple pages per story that are not printed in Europe, where they have only fifteen page adaptations. That's a matter of careful planning, and a bother, but otherwise we'd only be able to feature fifteen page stories over here, too.

FOOM: Do you confer much with Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc., about your treatment of Tarzan?

ROY: Not very much. Only when I was thinking about leaving the series, that was the only time. We had lunch together. For a while, they objected to the adaptations—they didn't want us using Edgar Rice Burrough's words. We could adapt the stories, but we weren't supposed to use any of his language, and that didn't make any sense to me. I think the best way to do an adaptation is to use whatever you can of the language of the author you are adapting—because, after all, ERB was the person who made up Tarzan, not me. But that's all been straightened out now, as far as I know, so I'm staying on the series. Otherwise, I don't have very much to do with them; they don't bother me and I don't bother them.

FOOM: Is there anything in particular that you, as the author, are attempting to emphasize in TARZAN that you feel hasn't been touched on in the past comic-book versions?

ROY: While I haven't always been able to put it into the adaptations as much as I would really like to, I think one of the things I would want to emphasize—which I stated in the first issue—is Tarzan's dual nature as both man and animal. I worked on that very hard in the first issue, in a sequence I invented entirely, during which Tarzan kills a lion. His face turns from a contorted, beast-like image into a refined human as he steps over the body of the lion and says, "Hello, I am Tarzan." That was my idea, emphasizing the fact that Tarzan has an almost dual personality, and goes back and forth between being a man and an animal. And that's the thing I enjoy the most, the reason why I adapted JEWELS OF OPAR, because Tarzan reverts to an almost beast-like state during that book. The only thing I dislike about JEWELS OF OPAR—since it has animals and evil white people and La of Opar in it—the only thing I dislike is the fact that, as in so many of the books, Tarzan spends a goodly portion of the story with amnesia. And amnesia gets rather boring.

Early comic-book version of Tarzan—a collection of HAROLD FOSTER daily newspaper strips.

FOOM: Do you feel any unusual pressures, dealing with such a famous fictional character?

ROY: Well, I feel I kind of got it out of my system now, I got used to it. I worked up to it with the Conan stories. While Conan has a smaller following, has not been around as long and is nowhere near as famous as Tarzan, there was enough Conan and Robert E. Howard purists to give me hell about everything from turning Red Sonja into a Conan character to the fact that Conan should wear more clothes or should have scars all over his body (which we should meticulously draw in every panel). That sort of thing. Once I got used to ignoring the comments from the Robert E. Howard purists, then the next step was to ignore the comments from the Edgar Rice Burroughs purists—and now I am working my way up to ignoring the comments from the STAR WARS purists. If you try to please all the self-appointed experts in any field, whether it's comics or prose or movies or whatever, you'll go crazy from the nit-picking. So I just do the best job I can, and if it's acceptable, people will buy the books and Marvel will continue to have me write the books; and, if it's not successful, I will leave. Otherwise, I don't pay too much attention to them.

I have done one thing which, to my knowledge, I don't think has ever been done in the history of Tarzan as a comic-book character; anyway, somebody can correct me if I'm wrong, but for the first time Tarzan does not use any vines. He may, in an individual shot, be scrambling down a vine, but he does not swing on vines. That's one thing I thought that was always a little ridiculous in the movies, although it rather worked there, I

suppose—but there aren't any vines strategically placed in the jungle, so with rare exceptions Tarzan is swinging from branch to branch, with almost never a vine in sight, except maybe one for him to swing down on.

FOOM: What are the benefits of working on TARZAN?

ROY: I can't think of any. I enjoy it, I think he's a good character—one of the great fictional characters of all time. But benefits, no. I think that Tarzan's been around for so long that there's much more attention being paid to characters like Conan these days.

FOOM: What are your personal feelings about writing both TARZAN and CONAN at the same time?

ROY: I don't see them being as similar as SPIDER-MAN and DAREDEVIL, which I wrote at the same time—or as similar as two super-teams like THE FANTASTIC FOUR and THE AVENGERS. As far as I'm concerned, TARZAN and CONAN have much less in common than most super-heroes. For one thing, unlike most super-heroes who operate in the real world (mostly New York, as a matter of fact), Tarzan and Conan live in totally different worlds and time periods most of the time, except on those rare occasions when Conan is in the jungle. Entirely different times. Entirely different outlooks. Except for the fact that John Buscema is drawing both of them and I'm writing both of them, I don't see any similarity at all, except insofar as Robert E. Howard was influenced by Edgar Rice Burroughs—and, therefore, occasionally snakes and apes and things like that will creep in that are obviously ERB influenced But, except for Howard being influenced by Burroughs, I don't see any similarity at all

FOOM: Do you have any special plans for Tarzan, himself?

ROY: I would like to continue adapting the novels, keeping Korak out and pushing Jane somewhat into the background—although, whenever she's there, I'd like to use her well . . though I'm not planning on having her in every story. It's a little awkward, having this married hero running around all the time. I think I did one of the first comic-book bedroom scenes with Tarzan—or the closest thing to it. He picks her up and carries her off into the bedroom, and I was kind of pleased with that because, you know, they ought to have a little bit of a sex life here and there That was as far as I'd want to go with it, but that certainly wasn't any farther than the scene in TARZAN FINDS A MATE, where he carries her off into the trees. And, now that he's recovered from amnesia, I'd like to keep working on his personality—but, basically, his personality is pretty well fleshed out in the book. I don't have the trouble Marv Wolfman says he had with John Carter, in that Tarzan, I think, has more of a personality than John Carter does. Therefore, I can play with that, where Marv had to sort of build up an entire personality for a guy who didn't seem to have one. Tarzan has a fairly well-developed, if not a totally realistic, personality—so it's fun playing with that.

FOOM: Will you ever bring Tarzan into the Marvel Universe?

ROY: As far as I'm concerned, he's there now; but he's there around fifty years ago.

FOOM: That kind of leads into my next question—do you plan to put Tarzan into WHAT IF . . .?

ROY: We have permission to do it, because Marv Wolfman and I discussed having Tarzan and John Carter meet. As you may know, a novel was written several years ago, called TARZAN ON MARS, by someone under the pseudonym of John Bloodstone. I have not been priveleged to see a copy of this book, but Marv and I wouldn't mind adapting our story from that. We decided that, rather than putting it into WHAT IF . . .?, which would mean that it wouldn't really have happened in the Marvel Universe, we would save it for next year's TARZAN and JOHN CARTER annuals, unless there's a change in plans. We hope to have Gil Kane and John Buscema do the art on this two-part comic-book novel, which would amount to about a sixty-page adaptation of TARZAN ON MARS. If Marv and I plot it together, I told him that, while he's on Mars, I want Tarzan to become chief of the white apes of Barsoom. But, otherwise, we haven't progressed any further on the project

FOOM: Do you have any plans concerning Korak—or other ERB characters?

ROY: Korak will be left out of the TARZAN book for a while longer, but I think that Korak should have a separate book, himself. Also, as I've said, I think that there should be more Marvel comic books based on the various Edgar Rice Burroughs series. I think that THE MONSTER MEN would make a good series, and I think Red Hawk (from the MOON MEN) would make a good series, and of course CARSON OF VENUS certainly ought to be a series It's quite different from the John Carter books. Carson of Venus is more like Flash Gordon. He does not have the super-human powers that John Carter has on Mars I think it should be an independent series all its own.

FOOM: How about the Inner World books?

ROY: Pellucidar would be a good series, although there's always a question of what to call it. I'm trying to pave the way for that, with the adaptation of TARZAN AT THE EARTH'S CORE, because that will introduce David Innes, and it would not be very hard to show how he came to the inner earth. And I thought that might stir up some interest for AT THE EARTH'S CORE I don't have any great personal interest in writing an AT THE EARTH'S CORE series, but somebody else could. My interests are mostly Tarzan, Carson of Venus—and, to a lesser extent, Red Hawk, from the MOON MEN book. "Red Hawk and the Moon Men" . . it sounds like a rock group, doesn't it? (Laughter) But I've always wanted to work on that The real problem is, of course, it takes a lot of work on the writer's and artist's part to get any particular world consistent. For instance, I've read some of the Tarzan books several times now—And Marv, also, has to be an expert on the minutae associated with Barsoom. There's a lot more to know with Tarzan than there is, even, with Conan.

But, still, it's all kind of worth it in the long run. *

Gang Way, Blokes! It's the–

FOOMtastic British Feature Page!

Last ish, we alerted all English boosters to the current upheavel underway in our weekly British editions, and this time we're gonna give you even more news galore! The DRACULA title we made mention of last time around has yet to materialize from its vampiric mist state, but a couple of other sensational surprises have cropped up to cop the attention of all enthusiasts.

RAMPAGE is a wog-boggling weekly starring the dynamic Defenders in full-length super sagas, backed up by various other super-features, such as Nova the Human Rocket! It's already taken England by storm—and there's no end in sight.

Also well on the way is a new monthly, in the same format as our beloved American black-and-white magazines, starring none other than the steel-eyed Cimmerian known as CONAN THE BARBARIAN! It's a sword-and-sorcerous treat that has long been awaited by the happy hordes of Hyborophiles!

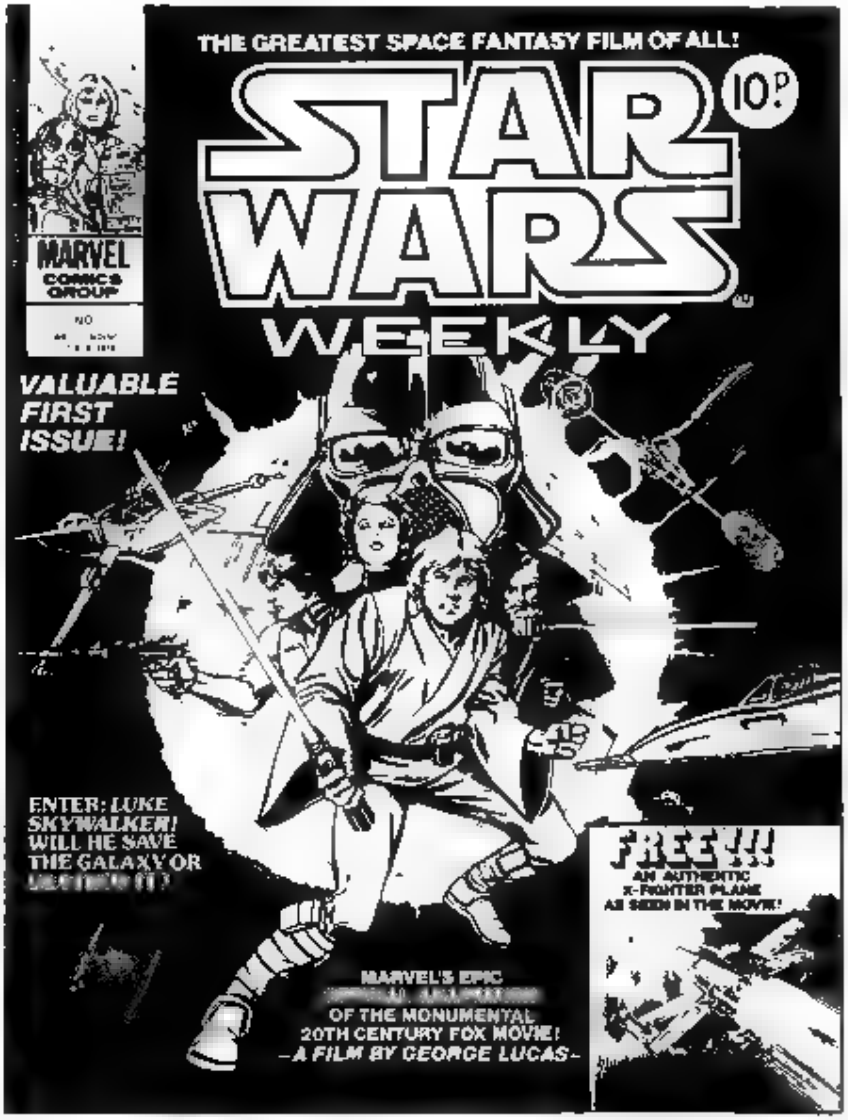
But the really big news is our spiffy STAR WARS weekly science fiction title! Yes, indeed, folks—it's a surefire dose of Marvel magic on a spacey scale, co-starring the Guardians of the Galaxy and a host of other s-f superstars!

On a more personal scale, we wanna bid Bubblin' *Bob Budiansky* a fond farewell and the very best of luck as he embarks on his new career as a freelance artist for mighty Marvel. Meanwhile, stepping into the British Department to aid Larrupin' *Larry Lieber* in his duties is a brand spankin' new assistant editor, Delerious *Danny Fingeroth*, (who has a background in film-making and a lifelong interest in comics)!

Welcome aboard, Dan, old man!

Finally, a last note to officically observe the fact that Captain America has replaced Captain Britain (at least for the nonce) in the pages of SUPER SPIDER-MAN, while the Lion of Liberty takes a well-earned vacation. Stay tuned to this space for further news of the good Cap's doings, as well as news of the many exciting projects still in store for British Marvel fans!

'Till next time—*ta ta*!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Department of inFOOMation

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STEVE GERBER

Editor/Writer: HOWARD THE DUCK

"For THE RAMPAGING HULK black-and-white magazine, I've done the last episode of the *Bloodstone* series *Alan Kupperberg* is drawing that I did a *Lilith* story—about discotheques, basically—that's going to appear in MARVEL PREVIEW, I believe, or in the new horror title I've also done a *Shanna, the She-Devil* back-up story for an unspecified issue of THE RAMPAGING HULK *Gene Colan* is the artist on the Lilith tale, but I don't know who will be handling the art chores on the Shanna story

"*Val Mayerick* has replaced *Gene Colan* on the newspaper HOWARD THE DUCK strip. If any fan wants to see it in his paper, he should contact the feature editor of his local newspaper and strongly urge them to carry it.

"As for the color HOWARD THE DUCK comic, I can only restate what I know about issue #'s 21–23 Issue #21 was drawn by *Carmine Infantino*; I believe *Klaus Janson* is inking it, the story is called, "If You Knew Soofi " and it's about Howard's altercation with a decency crusader The next two issues are going to be drawn by *Val Mayerick*, and Val may ink them, himself The title of #22 is "May the Farce be with You " It is the first part of a two-part story, and the second part is titled, "Star-Waaugh!" The subject matter should be obvious. *Gene Colan* will be back on the HOWARD comic-book as of issue #24, and should continue on as the regular artist "

ARCHIE GOODWIN

Editor: AVENGERS—CAPTAIN MARVEL—DAREDEVIL—DEFENDERS—DR. STRANGE—GODZILLA—GHOST RIDER—INCREDIBLE HULK—HUMAN FLY—IRON MAN—MAN FROM ATLANTIS—MARVEL TEAM-UP—MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE—MASTER OF KUNG FU—MS. MARVEL—SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN—X-MEN—POWER MAN/IRON FIST

c 1977, 1978 20th Century-Fox

"The X-MEN will be going monthly, not eight times a year as previously announced and, probably, MS MARVEL will be going bi-monthly That will better accommodate *Dave Cockrum's* plans to take over as penciler, anyway

"Right now, I still don't know what I'll be doing with THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN, now that plans for it becoming a dollar-size book have fallen through It looks like we'll still be doing it in the seventeen-page format for a while. With the Champions breaking up, Iceman and the Angel will be left in limbo, while some of the other Champions appear in THE AVENGERS, so look for them to turn up in THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN for an issue or two. The comic will continue to be scripted by *Bill Mantlo*, though we have a fill-in written by *Elliott Maggin*, with art by *Sal Buscema*, called 'The Beetle and the Badge ' Sal will continue to be the artist on THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN, with *Mike Esposito* remaining the inker

"*Mike Zeck* will be taking over as the artist on POWER MAN, because with THE X-MEN going monthly, *John Byrne* wanted to cut back a little. *Pat Broderick* will be the new artist on CAPTAIN MARVEL. Since Len Wein is leaving, *Roy Thomas* will be taking over THOR At this point, I assume with the same art team. *Marv Wolfman* will be scripting THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN and THE FANTASTIC FOUR, thus he'll be giving up TWO-IN-ONE *Roger Slifer* will take over as writer of that title

"We haven't picked a permanent replacement for *Roger Slifer* as editor of the black-and-whites yet, but *Dave Kraft* has agreed to pinch hit for us in that position for a while."

CHRIS CLAREMONT

"MARVEL TEAM-UP #69 is the first of a two-part team-up with Havoc against the Living Pharaoh. Then, #70 is Spidey and Thor against the Living Monolith which is the Pharaoh under a different name The two stories relate directly to the events occurring in X-MEN #111. Beyond #70, there's a possible team-up with the Black Panther There will also be a Spidey and Daredevil two-parter, with the Black Widow against Mandril and Nekra. And a couple of surprises, as always.

"*John Byrne* is leaving POWER MAN Issue #50 will be his last issue. Byrne will be concentrating on X-MEN and TEAM-UP Replacing him will be *Mike Zeck*, on issue #51—and, with any luck, he will be the permanent artist on it. The inker will probably be *Dan Green*, but I can't say for certain at this point Issue #51 sets up a three-part series, in which they find out that a criminal organization is using robot numbers runners in Harlem. underlying reason for this is, basically, "How do you arrest a robot? How do you prosecute?" Thus, #51 will be basically a character issue; essentially, we'll be focusing on Cage and Iron Fist. We'll be establishing their relationship Issue #'s 52 and 53 will be the main story, wherein Cage and Iron Fist confront the kingpins who seem to be taking over many of the New York rackets We'll keep their identity as a surprise for a while

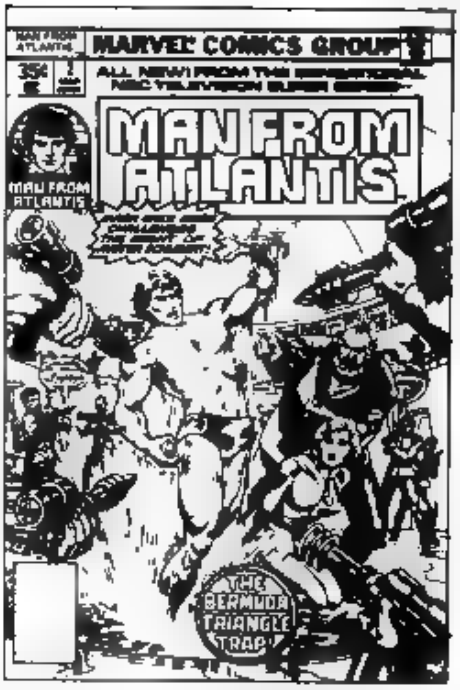
"X MEN is either going to be published eight times a year, or monthly And, with *Byrnes* dropping POWER MAN, he's got more than enough time to do it. Issue #110 is a fill-in art job by *Tony de Zuniga*. The villain is Warhawk, from IRON FIST, and it's basically a punch-out in the Danger Room, with a few twists here and there Number 111 is the return of Mesmero and the return of an old X-Man—the Beast. This is spinning out of the events depicted in TEAM-UP #69. The Beast comes back to the mansion, only to discover that things are seriously wrong Issue #'s 112 and 113 feature a rematch between the X-Men and Magneto Then, #'s 114, 115 and 116 comprise a Savage Land story, wrapping up all the loose ends from the Ka-Zar plotline, and heralding the return of Sauron Numbers 117 and 118 tentatively co-star Sunfire, in a story tentatively titled, "The Submergence of Japan." So the X-Men will be globe-trotting for the next few months The regular art team,

of course is *Byrne* and *Terry Austin*

"Tentatively, *Dave Cockrum* will be taking over MS. MARVEL, probably with either issue #19 or #20. We are in the process of totally redesigning her costume. MS. MARVEL #16 is the second part of the Tiger Shark storyline, wherein she has to tackle him in his own element—namely, the water. It will introduce her to the Avengers, and eventually they'll be asking her to join their ranks, which is a development *Jim Shooter* and I are jointly working on. Issue #17 is basically a character issue. It sets up the major villain of the book, tentatively called Mystique. She's a mysterious women within the US government, who has the ability to mimic the form of any human being, within certain limitations. She is eventually plotting to take over the USA in such a way that no one will know it, and have a puppet figure as president, with her as the real power. Ms. Marvel has no idea that this women exists. Issue #17 is basically "A Day in the Life of Carol Danvers." We decided to take a breather from the battle issues we've been doing lately. Issue #18 introduces a new villain, Centurion, and guest-stars some of the Avengers. Essentially, they battle Centurion—and Ms. Marvel saves the day. Issue #19 is tentative, since we are hoping that will be Dave's premiere issue, featuring "The Origin of Death Bird." But if it's not, then the story will be something else."

BILL MANTLO

"After the Midas story in IRON MAN that goes into Stark's relationship with Madame Masque, he regains his factory, which has been thoroughly demolished and has to be rebuilt. In the process of rebuilding it, he is attacked by the Growing Man; it turns out that the Growing Man has been planted on earth as a watchdog/emissary by a splinter group of Colonizers. This group became separated from the main body (which has already found a home) and is still searching. The Colonizers are the subplot. Iron Man defeats Growing Man, then he and Jack of Hearts go to the moon, tracking signals from Growing Man to some kind of sending station there. On the moon, they encounter a group of Soviet superheroes, who are there for the same reason. There is a resultant battle, as each group blames the other for the signals which have demolished both spacecrafts. Iron Man realizes that this giant Colonizer receiving station was the cause behind it all. He and Jack of Hearts find out that this group of Colonizers is about to land on the planet Wundagore, where the Wundagoreans have re-evolved again. Jack of Hearts will be around for a while, as a co-star, as Madame Masque runs the factory. The new artist is *Keith Pollard*. *Carmine Infantino* does issue #'s 108 and 109 with *Bob Wiacek* inking, then Keith takes over again. Keith and I will be plotting the story together, so he will be very much involved in the storytelling. I'm trying to transform IRON MAN into a vital Marvel magazine again. I am trying to revitalize the character and the new Stark International is going to be gleaming modern industry, world-wide in scope. Stark is going to be portrayed in a more realistic fashion as a powerful industrialist. He's also going to become the powerful Avenger I always thought he should be, he's not going to threaten to kick off every time he flexes his muscles. Also, the nature of his armor is



going to be explored in depth.

"THE HUMAN FLY will have us maintaining humanistic, realistic stories—considering that he is also a real person, as opposed to your normal super-hero. We're placing him in situations where as a normal man endowed with a measure of extra-ability and his own commitment to helping people—he has to cope on a rather realistic level. We're playing up the fact that this could happen to anybody; the situations occur as a result of his being a stuntman. We're doing a two-part story, in which he encounters both the White Tiger and Daredevil. Copperhead plays the role of a normal human being—a kind of protective role—while the heroes do the actual heroics, and I'm trying to make his role at least as interesting as what the heroes are doing. Other stories will be set around the country. We're trying to use realistic settings and locales, and the art chores have been alternating between *Frank Robbins* and *Lee Elias*. We're trying to maintain an integral continuity within the book, even though we're doing this strange kind of art switch system. We're building up a situation in which this woman reporter is digging into the Fly's identity, and we'll be working up to the question of "What is a secret identity? Does it really matter who's under the Fly's mask?" The whole idea is that it could be anybody. In fact, one story will feature the Fly being saved by one of his assistants, to show that anybody could be the Fly—that it really doesn't matter.

"Having seen the MAN FROM ATLANTIS show and read the scripts for the next six months, I plan to adhere to the characters as established in the pilot. Our plots will have much more

LEE ELIAS rough pencils for THE HUMAN FLY.

continuity than the TV stories provide, since they provide almost none. We are, in contrast, doing a much more realistic continuity, anchoring him to the Foundation for Procreatic Research, constantly coming back to find out who he is or what he is or what Atlantis might be. The first issue gives a hint of the scope—in one story, they find a ship that might be from Atlantis, because it's got the same symbol on it, but the ship is destroyed in a battle with an underwater scavenger pirate so he looses one more link to his past. The second and third issues are a two-part story, introducing the TV villain, Schubert—and we're trying to play the character very much like the one on the TV. He's got an undersea city, called Seatopia, and he's using this white mist which can either be a teleportation mist or a disintegration mist (whichever he programs it for) to kidnap people in mass quantities. He plans to either blackmail or wipe out the rest of the surface world, and replace them with his own stock of brainless people; Mark Harris thwarts the plan and shows himself to be not only a guy who swims around, but also a guy who thinks. The regular book will be drawn by *Frank Robbins.*"

ROGER McKENZIE

"In DAREDEVIL, I'm going to tie up the Killgrave mystery. As far as long range plans go, *Jim Shooter* had already plotted the next three issues, so I'll basically stick to what he has already said in FOOM. I'm toying with the idea of having Foggy Nelson go blind; this would happen as a result of him trying to find his girlfriend. He hasn't seen her since she was kidnapped several issues ago, and he'll be blinded as a result of getting beaten up while trying to get to her. I'm going to resolve the relationship between Matt and Foggy, which usually changes about every six months, anyway (laughter). They'll probably become friends once again; since they've known each other since college, they're either going to become friends or they're never going to see each other again. I'm going to keep Daredevil in New York, and team him up with some other super-heroes. I really can't give too many long range plans. Death-Stalker is still around and has yet to be explained. Paladin will return. The basic concept of DAREDEVIL will be undergoing two changes. One is that Daredevil is going to develop—as a result of Heather's father's suicide—a heightened empathy towards others. This will help explain why he's out fighting super villains. He's going to identify more with the other people around him, subliminally; it will give him a more personal commitment in everything he does. The other change is to get back some of the original aura of DAREDEVIL. He'll be doing more acrobatic stunts, like walking on his fingertips on a flagpole. Daredevil will, to an extent, also do a little more private detective work for his alter ego, Matt. As far as I know, *Gil Kane* and *Klaus Janson* are remaining on the book, and I'm tickled to death.

"Johnny Blaze will be meeting Doctor Strange, in GHOST RIDER #29. Dormammu has transported Ghost Rider from earth to an alien dimension, though he doesn't know it; he thinks he's in New York and that Doctor Strange, for some unknown reason, is trying to kill him. Of course, this is all a construct of Dormammu, who is trying to kill Ghost Rider through his construct. In the meantime, there's this character called Bounty Hunter, who works for the devil and is searching for Johnny Blaze. The idea is that, when you sell your soul to the devil, there eventually comes a time for him to collect. And if a mortal tries to run away, well, that's when the Bounty Hunter steps in. He's a Clint Eastwood-type on a horse, with smoke coming out of his nostrils. He and Blaze fight it out in issue #31, in a ghost town out west. Johnny's not quite a super-hero and he's not quite a supernatural character, either. Because of this, I'm going to try to diversify his adventures. I've got to tie up the matter of Roxanne, his girlfriend, in the issue in which the Orb returns. He's hypnotised her and she's completely forgotten Johnny, so I'm going to have to resolve that. With all the fighting going on, I'm afraid Johnny won't have much of a personal life for the next few issues. And, since Johnny's powers were granted by the devil, they are basically evil—though he uses them for good purposes. Therefore, the more he uses his Ghost Rider powers, the more they begin to corrupt him. This is going to be a slow process, over about a year. The Ghost Rider is going to become a little bit meaner in each story. And that's going to be built to a climax, and at that time I'm going to get rid of Satan completely and go on from there. After that I've got to sit down and talk to *Don Perlin*, the artist and see what he'd like to do.

"It's really great working for Marvel. I'm sure you've heard this story a dozen times over, but I started reading comics when I was young and I told myself that one day I'd work for Marvel, and now I am. Right now, I'm trying to get used to writing the Marvel style, which is a lot different from the other companies, and it's a real challenge—but a lot of fun, nonetheless."

DOUG MOENCH

"In issue #9 of GODZILLA, Godzilla destroys Las Vegas, I know that much. After that, there'll be some more super-hero guest stars. I'm not sure if it will be the Hulk or just who it will be.

"MASTER OF KUNG-FU #67, which follows the *Jim Craig* series, is done by *Mike Zeck* again, although it is not a fill-in issue *per se*, because we originally planned for this to happen. It's the final meeting between Shang-Chi, Juliet and Skull Crusher. Then there's the *Pat Broderick* issue called

"Home to Die," that reveals the mystery of Black Jack Tarr's past. It tells what happened during WW II, but it is set in the present. It's about the only love in Tarr's life, and it is also the return to Murder Mansion, which was shown in the *Jim Starlin* fill-in issue.

"In the RAMPAGING HULK, we've got the old Avengers appearing, in a two-part tale scheduled to appear in issue #'s 8 and 9. *Herb Trimpe* is doing the first part of the two-part Avengers story. I don't know who will be doing the second part. The story is set on the grounds of the New York World's Fair, which was under construction at the time."

JIM SHOOTER

"*George Perez* and I are in the middle of our AVENGERS epic, which is going to be a twelve-issue storyline. We're well into the Collector sequence, and that story will feature a shock ending that should surprise everyone. Also, about then, Ms. Marvel should be joining the Avengers. George and I are going to continue our policy of guest-starring as many other characters from the Marvel Universe as we can—virtually anyone can turn up. The first issue of the epic had Nighthawk and the Guardians of the Galaxy, and in every issue we'll try to feature as many people, either in cameos or as integral parts of the story, as we can, since the story itself is structured to allow for it. Issue #'s 170–172 will feature the Champions, and in the adventure they will officially disband, which I feel will be kind of a milestone. After we finish the Collector sequence, we'll be going into a couple of other major themes of the epic, before we finally conclude it. Hopefully, it will have the same kind of impact as the *Jim Starlin* Thanos epic. We're really pouring our hearts into this and we are having a lot of fun producing it."

ROGER SLIFER

"As I was just assigned the TWO-IN-ONE title a couple of days ago, I haven't yet had the time to sit down and decide what I plan to do with it. About the only thing I *do* know at this point is that I plan to work closely with *Mary Wolfman*, the new writer of THE FANTASTIC FOUR. Marv and I both want to work very hard to coordinate the two books. We both feel the TWO-IN-ONE title should supplement the FF. In other words, even though the FF will be where any *major* changes are made in the Thing character, in the TWO-IN-ONE title, I will expand on

those changes and try to examine his personal conflicts in even greater depth.

"My first issue of MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE will be #39 which guest-stars Daredevil. It's the second part of 'The Thing on Trial' sequence and is drawn by *Ron Wilson*, co-plotted by Marv and myself, and scripted by me.

"There are already several issues of TWO-IN-ONE in the works, plotted by Marv. There's a crossover with the NOVA title, drawn by *Sal Buscema* and inked by *Frank Giacoia*, which will begin in TWO-IN-ONE and finish up in NOVA. This is tentatively scheduled to begin in MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE #40, but is subject to change. There is also a TWO-IN-ONE guest-starring Hercules planned, which is being drawn by *Bob Hall* and another starring the Human Torch, which is being pencilled by *Joe Sinnitt*, the regular inker of the FF. Neither of these issues have been scheduled, as they are being done by Bob and Joe in their spare time. My first solo assignment will be either #40 or #41.

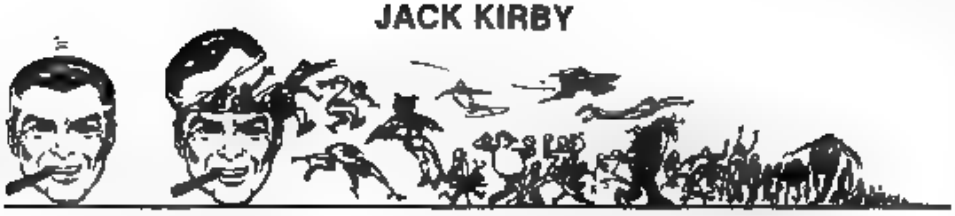
"I'm really looking forward to becoming a full-time freelance writer. I was on staff for three and a half years, and it was time for a change. Even though I enjoyed my brief tenure as an editor, I felt the quality of the books was getting better and better. The mail response on the books I had edited was very good, too. The worst thing about going freelance is that I almost feel I'm deserting the readership. I hope they understand and continue to follow and support my efforts in the writing realm.

"And speaking of my writing efforts, this seems as good a place as any to mention that in addition to scripting TWO-IN-ONE, I'll also be scripting FANTASTIC FOUR #192 over a plot by *Len Wein*. Also, I'm scheduled to write the AVENGERS ANNUAL, next summer."

ROGER STERN

"DOCTOR STRANGE #28 will feature the final chapter of the Creators/In-Betweener story, in which Doctor Strange fights the In-Betweener for the fate of the universe. The title of the story is "Fate like a Wheel." Issue #29 is untitled as yet, but it guest-stars Nighthawk from THE DEFENDERS, and puts Nighthawk and Strange against the Death Stalker. It's kind of an off-beat Strange story. The art team for the series is *Tom Sutton* and *Ernie Chan*. Later on, Doc Strange will encounter a cult of people who worship fear, and meet a young lady who can get into your dreams and make them real, named Dream-Weaver. And, in further issues (which might possibly involve a crossover with THE DEFENDERS) is the fate of the Black Knight. After that, I have some things planned with Doc Strange going to England. I honestly feel that *Tom Sutton* is doing some of the best art he's ever done in his entire career—it's really fantastic, and I'm having a ball writing off it.

"HULK #221 is called "Show Me the Way to Go Home," and features the problems of Bruce Banner finding his way back to New York, a few interesting developments at Gamma Base, plus a guest appearance by Sting-Ray, who hasn't been seen for quite a while. *Sal Buscema* and *Joe Rubenstein* are handling the art chores for THE HULK. Joe is very enthusiastic about working on THE HULK.



Editor/Writer/Artist: BLACK PANTHER—DEVIL DINOSAUR—MACHINE MAN

"THE BLACK PANTHER, right now, is trying to get back home. I'm broadening the background of his character, and introducing his family. You will see a little more of what his family is like, the kind of heritage they've got, and the kind of people they are. They're also involved in the mystery of vibranium, which is a metal that has been entrusted to T'Challa's family. It's still more-or-less a secret item, and the only thing they know is that it has a profound effect on whoever touches it. Jakarra is one of the villains, and he has been affected by vibranium, he's got hypnotic and shock power. Vibranium has changed him into a completely different kind of being, and the problem occurs when the Panther's people try to stop him. As a result, they form a new set of characters called the Black Musketeers, who are members of the ruling family. Someone from the Panther's family, a ruling Panther, has to take his place, since he can't be present. Of course, these ruling Panthers are modern people. One of them is a financier, another is a young doctor, and the third is a flashy woman. In actuality, they come from a sort of fighting clan, their problem is that they must drop whatever role they're playing in modern society and get back to their old traditions. They'll be featured for a while, and I've got new super-heroes coming up along with new super villains, as well! I've got a really good one in mind, but I'd hate to give it away too early.

"DEVIL DINOSAUR is a very unique book. I think it's going to be very good. The hero of the thing is the dinosaur himself. He's actually red, and he becomes a distinctive character in the book; of course, the book contends that the dinosaurs were a little bit smarter than we think they were. Since they were around for 750 million years, my contention is that at least one of them must have learned something. Of course, it's done at a time when nature was experimenting with all kinds of animals—including men. Devil Dinosaur will be encountering the very beginnings of our civilization, everything that happened before history was written, the things that made our mythology—it's like rewriting Genesis. Devil has a side-kick called Moon-Boy, who is the First Boy. He's a sort of dawn man—the earliest type of man. And he travels with the dinosaur.

"MACHINE MAN is a machine that thinks like a man. His problem is to find a new identity. It's not going to be the usual super-hero thing at all, you see, he's a sort of persecuted machine, because there's a government agency continually out to destroy him. They've got orders to destroy him, so he's continually being hunted down. And so he's always meeting new people—both friends and foes. He has lots of powers. He's a very, very advanced machine. Anything a machine can do, he'll be able to do. So far, I'm having him remain in the United States—but his range is universal.

"I'm very proud of all three comics; I believe there's a touch of humanity in all of them, and I believe that's what ties them in with Marvel Comics—the problems of the characters are very much like our own. They handle them in their own way. Essentially, whether the character is a super-hero or a super-villain, it's the inner battle about being human or not. Super-heroes and super-villains alike must struggle with their own humanity."

DAVID ANTHONY KRAFT

Editor/Writer: FOOM—MARVEL CALENDAR—CLASSICS COMICS—MARVEL PREVIEW—MARVEL COMICS SUPER SPECIAL—RAMPAGING HULK—SPIDEY SUPER STORIES

"As you've all no doubt noticed by now, mighty Marvel is on the move yet again, which means our various editorial plans and projects are in a temporary state of flux as of this writing. Even so, I'll do my best to bring you all up to date on the latest changes and the neat new offerings we have in store!

"I am currently acting editor of the magnificent Marvel line of illustrated magazines, as well as the color Marvel Classics. And talk about transitions! F'rinstance, THE RAMPAGING HULK will give way with issue #9 to an all-new graphic outing— SATANA! That's the immediate, on-the-spot, late-breaking scoop! Details will follow in 'Final FOOM Flashes' this issue, and here in next issue's 'Department of InFOOMation,' so stay tuned! Meanwhile, let me refer you to Devil-May-Care *Doug Moench's* section for the lowdown on the shennanigans of the misunderstood behemoth; and to *Steve* (Baby) *Gerber's* section for the final Bloodstone story scheduled to appear in RAMPAGING HULK #8 and the Shanna the She-Devil story planned for #9. In my own modest way, I've already ballyhooed MARVEL PREVIEW #13 muchly right here in these FOOM-tastic pages last ish, so I hope you frantic UFOlogists will settle for a simple reminder that it's the best blamed self-contained saga yet to be scripted by yours truly, and let it go at that! Is it a deal? And my final announcement as acting editor is the news that, from now on, there will be only four Marvel Classics published per year (after all, we don't wanna use up all the good literature too fast, or we'll run out!)

"As for MARVEL COMICS SUPER SPECIAL #3, the full-color lavish *Beatles* extravaganza announced here last issue is well underway, with *George* (Pacesetter) *Perez* penciling and Kinky *Klaus Janson* set to ink . . . and just between us, folks, it looks like sheer magazine magic! And we've got even more rock'n'roll specials up our sleeves for the months to come, so don't be surprised if all of your fave raves turn up in our platinum pages!

"Also on the subject of rock comic specials, I'm even now pow-wowing with Smilin' Stan about an adaptation of the forthcoming SGT PEPPER'S LONELY HEARTS CLUB BAND major motion picture (which is set to star *Peter Frampton* and a whole passle of other heavy metal luminaries)! We're not sure yet just what the final format will be, but it's a good bet that it'll eventually appear as an all-original MARVEL TREASURY EDITION. The script is a scream!

"The dynamic DEFENDERS is chock full of magicks, demons, devilry, and all manner of mayhem as we blast into the final part of the Devil-Slayer trilogy! Energetic *Ed Hannigan* and Kinky Klaus are surpassing themselves on this spooky story of Xenogenesis, as the Defenders strive to save the world! Dr. Strange is back with a vengeance—and wait'll you see the Hellcat take her telekinetic powers to their outer limits! DEFENDERS #60 has it *all*!

"SPIDEY SUPER STORIES is charging ahead, charming adults and children alike with sensational easy-to-read adventures of our friendly neighborhood web-slinger, and we've even got a special Simon & Schuster project in the works—a trade paperback collection featuring THE BEST OF SPIDEY SUPER STORIES in one voomy volume, due to appear sometime next spring in better bookstores everywhere. So look for it!

"Also on the subject of Marvelous items for our younger fans, watch for at least a couple GIANT COLOR-AND-LEARN BOOKS starring the Amazing Spider-Man and the Incredible Hulk! The former is illustrated by Jazzy *John Romita, Jr.* and the latter is delineated by Groovy *Gary Brodsky*, with simple scripts for both by DAK (that's me!)

"As for future issues of FOOM—not only have we got more fun in store, but we also have big plans to revitalize the club, as well! I can't spill the beans just yet, cause Ol' Smiley hasn't got the whole magilla sorted out, but as soon as he lets me know, I'll pass on the poop—and that's a promise!

"See ya next ish, FOOMers. Take care and stay aware!"

THE ROCKY BADLANDS OF ZAMORA HIDE MANY A SUDDEN PERIL... SUCH AS THE VENOMOUS SERPENT WHICH HAS JUST LASHED OUT AT CONAN'S PURLOINED STALLION...
YOU WERE A GOOD MOUNT, NAB.
I'LL MISS YOU.
AT LEAST, I WILL IF I LIVE LONG ENOUGH!
I'M MANY LEAGUES FROM SHADIZAR THE WICKED, AND THAT INFERNAL SUN'S HOT ENOUGH TO PARCH MY BONES.
WELL, NO USE TALKING TO MYSELF! I'D BETTER--
WHAT'S THAT SOUND?!
IF IT'S DESERT BRIGANDS, I'LL--!
THE SOUND OF SCURRYING FOOTFALLS AMID THE ZAMORIAN WASTE SENDS YOUNG CONAN HURLING HIMSELF INTO THE SHADOW OF A JAGGED BOULDER...
THEN, ANOTHER SOUND IS ABRUPTLY HEARD...
HELP!
HELP ME!
IN THE NAME OF MITRA-- SOMEONE PLEASE HELP ME!
HELP--!!
WHOA, GIRL! STOP ALL THAT RUNNING AND YAMMERING FOR A MINUTE--
--AND TELL ME WHAT YOU'RE DOING 'WAY OUT HERE!

Sample of the new CONAN newspaper strip by ROY THOMAS & JOHN BUSCEMA.

ROY THOMAS

Editor/Writer: CONAN THE BARBARIAN—INVADERS—KULL THE DESTROYER—MARVEL PREMIERE—RED SONJA—SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN—STAR WARS—TARZAN—THOR—WHAT IF . . . ?

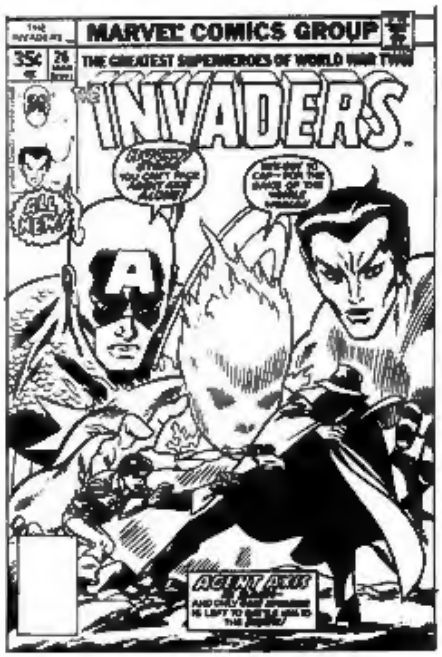
"In the INVADERS, I'll be doing a series of stories in which Bucky and Toro and a couple of other wild youngsters—who gain wild super-powers—form a group called the Kid Commados. This is a replacement for the Young Allies, which they were really members of in the comics of the Forties. One reason for this is so I can keep Bucky and Toro here in the states; that way I can concentrate more on the adult members of the Invaders in the comic, in the future. I want to write Bucky and Toro into the Invaders less, so I can concentrate on Captain America, Namor, Torch, Spitfire, Union Jack and maybe some other characters. The kids kind of get in the way. They'll be in and out, off and on. There is one special issue being scripted by *Don Glut*, under my direction, entitled 'Heil, Frankenstein!' drawn by *Lee Elias*, which is a replay of a typical Forties plot in which a descendent of the original Dr. Frankenstein creates a monster for the Nazis. Regular issues will continue to be drawn by *Frank Robbins*. The Invaders will return to the states in the near future, but beyond that it's anybody's guess.

"I'm taking over the THOR book, but I'm unsure with which issue that will become effective, so I can't say anything about that at all, I'm afraid. I assume *Walt Simonson* will remain the artist.

"In RED SONJA, I'm continuing a series of adventures in which a Hannibal-like character is featured. These began in issue #7, and will continue through #'s 8, 9, and 10. *Clara Noto* continues to plot them, since I feel that because it's a woman's comic-book a woman's view should be felt.

"In CAPTAIN AMERICA, Cap is continuing his search to find out who Steve Rogers is. *Don Glut* is writing a couple issues of that, so I'm not sure exactly where that's going. Cap will have less to do with the Falcon in the future. *Sal Buscema* is the artist.

"Conan teams up with a black barbarian, Zula, in CONAN #84, to search for Belit, who has gone ahead of him to the capital of Stygia. Zula is a little different from your typical barbarian character. He's an ex-slave who has some sorcerous powers, since he was a sorcerer's apprentice in the City of Magicians in Stygia. He's a character, not necessarily designed for a spin-off, but one that I've been wanting to introduce into the series for a long time. And I think it'll be rather interesting to



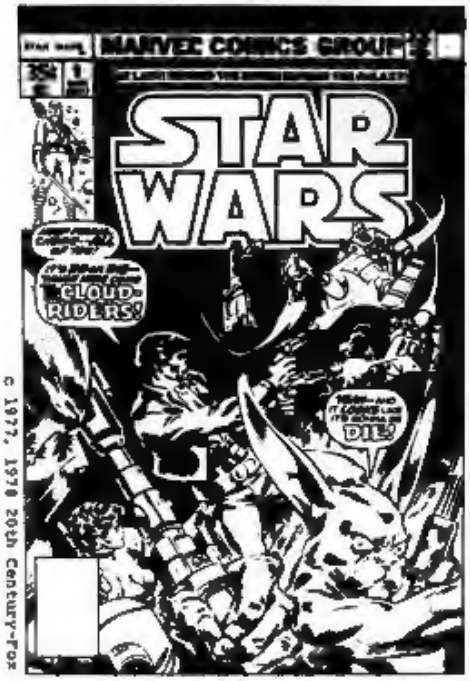
see the reaction to him. But I thought it was about time that we brought a new character into the comic. The story of Conan and Belit searching for her father will continue, to find out whether he's living or dead, and whether she will be able to return to the throne, or whatever. But I haven't plotted much beyond that, so I can't give you more than just a general idea.

"After the completion of the TARZAN AND THE JEWELS OF OPAR adaptation in the TARZAN comic-book, we have two jungle tales being adapted: 'A Jungle Joke' and 'The Lion,' which, of course, are both taken from THE JUNGLE TALES OF TAR-

ZAN book. After that, *John Buscema* and I will begin a project which is kind of dear to our hearts—the adaptation of the Edgar Rice Burroughs' book, TARZAN AT THE EARTH'S CORE. This will get Tarzan out of the usual jungle setting and into the center of the earth and the strange world of Pellucidar down there.

"King Kull is continuing the search for his throne in KULL THE DESTOYER. Again, *Don Glut* is handling that, and I don't have the plotline far enough in advance of what he's working on to say anything specific.

"THE SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN will feature a full-length, 60-page story called 'Blood of the Gods,' which is a Robert E. Howard non-Conan story that has been adapted into one. *Ernie Chan* is doing a rather special story—it's a Conan story as seen from a woman's point of view, and it's being co-written by *Christy Marx*. *Mike Ploog* is working on a Kull story. There'll be some more Solomon Kane stories, written by *Don Glut* and illustrated by various artists, especially



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Dave Wenzel. We'll be serializing a glossary of place-names of the Conan stories in SAVAGE SWORD, soon, too, and I think this will be of interest to all Conan fans. I've got a couple more Conan stories in the works by *John Buscema*—and also one by *Frank Brunner*, which will be completed soon, called 'The Scarlet Citadel.' There're Red Sonja stories being done by *Frank Thorne*, *Dick Giordano* and *Howard Chaykin* as back-up features for SAVAGE SWORD, all of them either to be written or co-written by myself.

"In STAR WARS, the storyline begun in issue #7 will run through #10, which will be the last one I'll be scripting. Issue #7 is a story in which Han Solo and Chewbacca lead several various and colorful aliens against a robber baron-type on this kind of backwater world, and this plotline is continued through #10. In the meantime, I've started a quest in which Luke Skywalker goes out looking for another rebel base, since the rebels can no longer stay on Yavin IV. He disappears, and Princess Leia goes out looking for him and the 'droids. By issue #11, then, *Howard Chaykin* and I plan to have Luke featured in the comic more, and probably the person who takes over as scripter after me will carry along with this plan. Howie, I believe, is also planning to leave the comic-book with issue #10, so there'll be a whole new team after that. I really had a lot of fun writing it, but since my whole thing was to write space operas, rather than STAR WARS as such, I just prefer working on other material of my own."

MARV WOLFMAN

Editor/Writer: AMAZING SPIDER-MAN—FANTASTIC FOUR—NOVA—TOMB OF DRACULA—WARLORD OF MARS

"In SPIDER-MAN, I want to make some major changes in the strip. I don't want to discuss them in depth, because I think that SPIDER-MAN is a series that should constantly be surprising to readers—but there will be some drastic changes. I want things to advance, again; I've felt that things have been moving a touch too slowly. There'll be a lot of character changes—I want to go back to the idea of Spidey being a hero who does have problems. It's so much a part of SPIDER-MAN. Len's been returning to that concept,

and I'm going to continue that even more. There'll be a lot of cast changes, situation changes and personality changes. Some of them will become evident in my first issue. There will be a lot of new supporting characters. I'm not getting rid of anybody—I'm just adding new characters—so the readers will have more people to like, or dislike. Len just had, within the last year, used all the old villains—Dr. Octopus, Hammerhead, Green Goblin and the like. I want to play on some of the original villains Len created, because I really like them—among them the Will-o'-the-Wisp, the Rocket Racer and Stegron. Of course, as soon as a little time has passed, I'd like to bring back the major villains. It's just that you should have them running around constantly in the comic-book. I'll be creating a few new ones myself, of course. The relationship between Peter Parker and Mary Jane Watson will be resolved in the first issue I script. I've pretty well worked out what I want to do with Mary Jane, but since I've already said that I think SPIDER-MAN should be a book of surprises, I'm going to keep those plans under wraps. I hope *Ross Andru* stays on as artist on SPIDER-MAN. I love working with Ross;

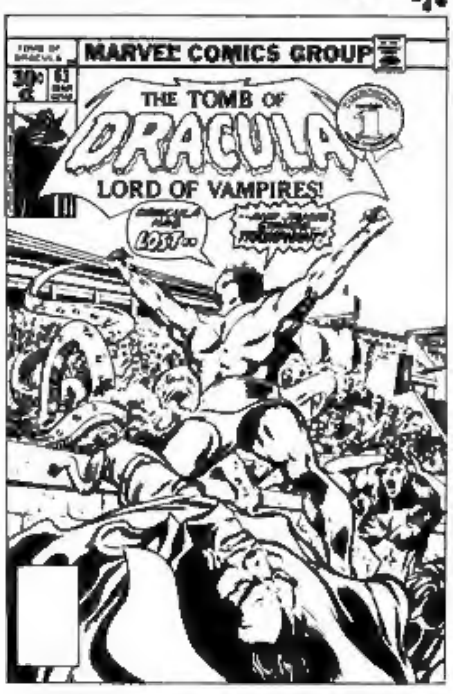
"About two years ago, when I left as editor-in-chief of Marvel and when Roy was still planning to return, I was slated to do the FANTASTIC FOUR. I had about a year-and-a-half's worth of stories plotted, which both Roy and Len worked off, so now that I'm going to script the FF, finally, I'll be able to wrap up my basic ideas. Issue #200 will be the long-awaited confrontation between Reed Richards and Doctor Doom—just the two of them—no zillion supporting villains and heroes. It will just be the two greatest minds in the world, facing off against each other. It had to come down to that, since Doom has fought all the others in one form or another. I'm planning this to be a real special battle. Johnny Storm is going to have a high school reunion and realize, if anything, that he's wasted his life, because he's nothing without his flame. But that's not what he started to out to be, so I'm going to be doing something with Johnny. The biggest thing is to try to come up with some new FF stories. To me, the FF will be the tough title in so many ways, because how do you top what has been done before? I'll be developing the individuality of the Fantastic Four more. Stan created two nearly-perfect concepts with the FANTASTIC FOUR and SPIDER-MAN and what I hope to do is develop them along the lines that Stan set forth. My first two issues of the FF are just dialoguing the artwork, so I'll be working off Len's storylines. My first FF will be the third issue that bears my by-line; that's the first one in which I'll be able to chart my own course. Obviously, I'm very nervous about taking over both books; I know I can write the FANTASTIC FOUR, because I've written it before—and I'm very interested in SPIDER-MAN though I have no idea how I'll do. I looked over the first issue of the FF that *Keith Pollard* drew—the first issue I'll be scripting—and it's incredibly good. I am very enthusiastic about it. I think he did a magnificent job on it. I did the FF ANNUAL with Keith, and it was fun, and I think the two of us on the regular strip can really do something great with it.

"DRACULA goes to Hell. In fact, the title of the story for issue #63 is 'The Road to Hell.' In #64, he encounters Satan in Hell and there is a climax that nobody expects. That leads into a whole new Dracula novel, which goes into the vampire attack on America. Dracula recruits an army of vampires, for the purpose of revenge, because Satan decided to humiliate Dracula and remove all his vampiric traits, turning him into a human being. And what he has to go through for the next two issues totally decimates him. Only his will is resolved. So he is seeking the total destruction of the United States. How we're going to get around not having any super-heroes pop up is beyond me, but I'll think of something, I'm sure.

"JOHN CARTER, WARLORD OF MARS #11 is the origin of Deja Thoris issue. It is done by *Dave Cockrum* and myself. Issue #12 hasn't been plotted as yet, so I can't really say, though it will continue with new adventures of John Carter on Mars.

"In NOVA #19, the villain is Blackout. This issue was plotted, drawn and written six months before the blackout of New York City, so it was not originally designed to take advantage of the actual situation that occurred. An amusing anecdote is that I had Rich Ryder make a comment about the blackout—referring to the original one—completely forgetting that he would only have been about four at the time and wouldn't really remember it. By coincidence, that line now makes sense, since he's referring to the second blackout. The artwork is done by *Carmine Infantino* and *Tom Palmer*. Issue #20 will be the second half of the Thing/Nova Team-up, and it takes place in Japan. Issue #21 begins a new life for Richard Ryder. There will be a more serious handling of the book; basically, a little more adult. He and his girlfriend basically come to terms as to where they stand with each other, and it will be a little bit closer to the reality of handling the situation, as I start, after two years, to finally get the feel of the character.

"SPIDER-WOMAN #1 is the origin story. I redefine the origin—and she becomes a completely different character. Issue #2 has her meeting the villain, Excalibur—and the person behind Excalibur is Morgan le Fey, King Arthur's sister, who is handling the whole operation from the past. She's trying to avoid Arthur and his vengeance by escaping into the future. Issue #3 begins a whole new direction for Spider-Woman, which sounds crazy for the third issue, but it will be much more down to earth and mysterious. The tagline for the book is "To Know Her is to Fear Her!" It's going to be more of a mystery comic than a super-hero comic. The art team for the comic will be *Carmine* and *Tony de Zuniga*." *



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